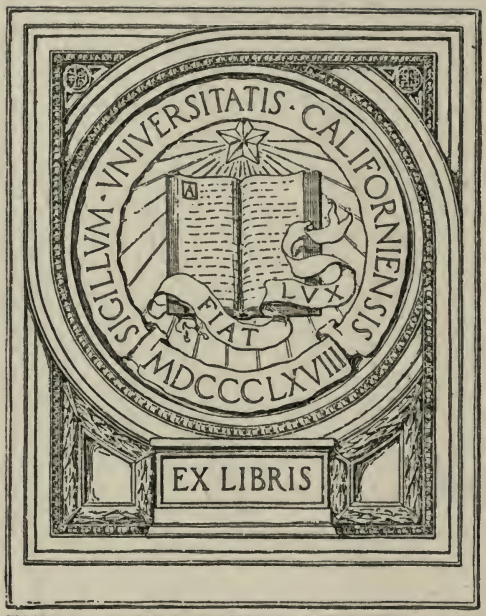
TO BAGDAD WITH THE BRITISH

ARTHUR TILLOTSON CLARK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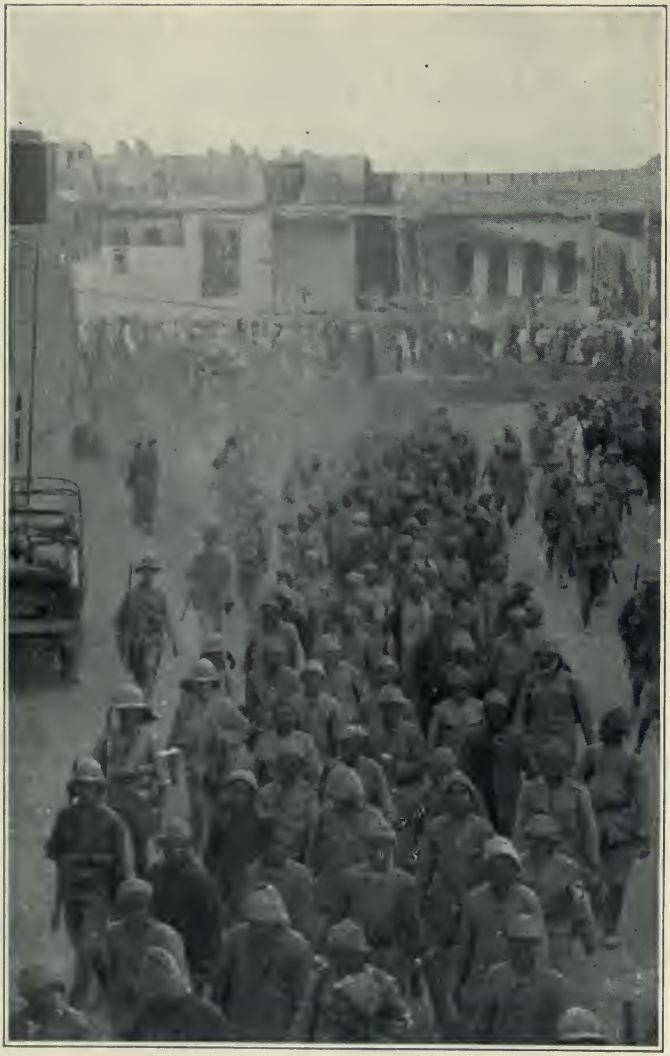

Turkish troops prisoners in Bagdad

TO BAGDAD WITH THE BRITISH

BY

ARTHUR TILLOTSON CLARK

ILLUSTRATED

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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TO
MY MOTHER

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FOREWORD

The author of this work, Mr. Arthur T. Clark, is a member of Princeton University of the Class of 1918. In the midst of his college course he gave up his work to enlist as a member of the Young Men's Christian Association, going to the most difficult of all fields in the world, that of Mesopotamia. This volume is a record of his experiences there in the midst of the stirring war scenes of the campaign which resulted successfully in the capture of Bagdad.

Mr. Clark's account is based upon an intimate knowledge of the events which he personally observed and of which he was a part. This gives us an excellent idea of a chapter in the world's war which is little known and yet which has unique significance. The capture of Bagdad places an insurmountable obstacle in the way of the German realization of their Hamburg-Persian Gulf ambition. It is well for us all to know something of the particular events whose significance will be more and more appreciated as time goes on and as the insolent ambitions of Germany are more and more clearly revealed.

The author of this book is now a member of the United States Aviation Corps and I am sure will give his services as conscientiously and valiantly to the army of his own country as at the beginning of the war he gave his best efforts in the Y. M. C. A. service of our great ally.

JOHN GRIER HIBBEN,
President of Princeton University.

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TO BAGDAD WITH THE BRITISH

CHAPTER I

PREPARING FOR THE PLAY "ON TO BAGDAD"—ENGLAND IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND THE GERMAN-BAGDAD RAILWAY

In the Great War Mesopotamia is a "side show." Its importance is not to be compared with that of the western front. The fact that the war must be won in France is brought home to us every day. No matter what may happen to the front in Roumania, in Italy, in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, the French front holds the key to the end of the war and our final victory. But there are points of view from which even side shows are important.

The war in France has been characterized over and over again as "a grim business." Such it certainly is. For one who is in it continually, it

becomes more than a grim business. It becomes a nerve-racking, monotonous business. There are plenty of side lights that brighten up the thing in spots for certain people, but the whole war as a war is a great exhibition of strength, of capacity, of grim determination.

If we would get away from war as it is in France and still feel in close touch with the Great War, we could do better than catch a glimpse of the side show in Mesopotamia. There we can get into the atmosphere of melodrama, of romance, of imagination. For the side show there was "On to Bagdad" and has proved that in the right place war even to-day can be a romance.

As one of the surging crowds that have gone to fairs, from county fairs to world fairs, I have always been carried away, with the rest, by the exhibition of the triumphs of genius, of force, of endurance that man has won in every phase of life. I have entered the exhibition grounds with a sense of awe, and have left them with a greater respect for my fellow men and a greater faith for the future. But I have always, somehow, wandered into the side shows that grow up near the

grounds, where a tired fair-goer may pass a refreshing hour watching a magician, or a melodrama staged by a company of traveling players. The bare feats of strength and of brains at which I marveled so, were in themselves too prosaic and I sought the human touch.

It was my good fortune—before America came into the war and while the grim business of war was still something of which we knew little and felt less—to go to the war in Mesopotamia.

In America we were still blissfully ignorant of all the ambition of Germany and of all that war means. For us students at Princeton, life was going on as happily and peacefully as ever, when the call came for men to go with the British troops to Mesopotamia, "where there is the most atrocious climate in the world and where there are more insects and germs to the square inch than there are bullets to the square mile." That was the way it sounded. Needless to say, those who told us the discouraging tales of the country had an insight into the fancies of college men. Promise them adventure even in the worst place in the world and they will risk their necks. In this case

there was more still, the chance to give a hand. After much confabbing and deciding, five of us found ourselves on a transatlantic steamer bound for—that we did not know. If we could believe the "Arabian Nights" we were certainly on a curious expedition. Think of going to Bagdad or to one of the wonder-lands of *Sindbad the Sailor!*

We sped across the Atlantic, through the danger zone, to the beautiful country of France, rent asunder by war. Just a week there was enough to teach us the awful lessons of war. Then on, dodging submarines continually, we sailed through the blue and white Mediterranean. War-ships and transports signaled to us as we passed. Next we glided slowly through the Suez Canal, where the vassals of Germany were trying to break through to cut off that route to India. The banks of the canal were covered thick with troops, Indian, Egyptian, and English, and the Turks were near by. Not many days before, they had made a desperate charge on the canal and had even launched a boat before they were driven back. Next we sizzled through the Red Sea and stopped at its end at Aden. Just behind that town

of exile, too, the Turks were stirring up trouble. We were half way around the world and still there was war. We began to realize that this truly was a World War. Driven on by the monsoon we reached India, and there, in the beautiful harbor of Bombay, were freighters with munitions and supplies, transports with troops, and hospital boats with wounded and sick. We heard that a steamer had just been sunk by a German mine not far from the coast. In India we found troop trains rushing troops up through the country to the northwest frontier to fight the tribes of Afghans, and to the interior to put down the trouble that Germans were trying to stir up in India itself. Surely the war was everywhere. And we were yet to go to the land of fairy stories. Finally we arrived even there, sailing up through the Persian Gulf to Busra, Sindbad's port.

From there, as a sort of stage hand, it was my privilege to watch closely some of the acts of the splendid side show, "On to Bagdad," to follow the armies of Great Britain up through the most interesting of all countries, to move up the winding Tigris past the remains of the glories of the

Chaldeans, of the Babylonians, of the Persians, of the ancient Greeks, and of the great Arabian Kaliphs, to the wonderful city of Bagdad.

We hardly realize how closely connected the World War is, from end to end of the earth. Away out there at the other side of the globe a big part of the Great War has been fought and won. No one can tell how many more of the wide plans of the Kaiser might now be carried out if the little British wedge in the Persian Gulf had not been in the way to hold so many of the troops of Germany's vassals in Mesopotamia. No one can tell how real might have become the Kaiser's boast of control of India, Egypt and the rest of Africa. *"Drang nach Oesten"* lay beneath the war in Mesopotamia. The key to the hoped-for world supremacy for Germany lay in her control of the highway of Asia Minor, Palestine and Mesopotamia, the great highway to the East. Mesopotamia, which in the days of Babylon supported ten million people, again rose to importance in the affairs of the world.

Back in 1914, as the war was approaching, over 72,000 laborers were working on the Berlin-Bag-

dad Railway, trying to shove it through the Taurus mountains and get it in shape so that it could carry Pan-German troops over to the Persian frontier and give a chance for the drive on India, the first step in the conquest of the Far East. At the same time the railways in Palestine were getting ready to rush other Pan-German troops down from Asia Minor to block the Suez Canal, that most important route to India and the Far East from the Mediterranean.

Mesopotamia, lying right between Palestine and Persia, was the key position. For England to hold the troops of the enemy there would mean relief both in Persia and in Palestine, and safety for India and Egypt. It might mean the salvation of the entire Far East. Now, in 1918, when both Bagdad and Jerusalem are under British protection, we have a glimpse of the real importance of the war in Mesopotamia, for the campaigns in Mesopotamia and Palestine have worked together to block the deep-laid plans of the Huns. They are far from Egypt and far from India.

Emperor William, soon after his accession to the German throne, proclaimed himself Defender

of Islam, the Mohammedan world; became the guardian of the Turkish throne; and, on the most shady of premises, started the Berlin-Bagdad Railway. These three facts spelled one thing—expansion eastward. They meant that Egypt and India would before long feel the pressure of German intrigue; that either by stealth or by force Germany would some day seize them both. With her railways, her Mohammedan vassals and her trade, she was well on the way—and then came the war, and with it a little British force from India on an island of the Persian Gulf, at the entrance of Mesopotamia.

Strange that into that decayed, historic, mysterious country should come a great war, fought by great modern armies! Strange, too, how it all came about!

The "Arabian Nights" tells the tales of the wonderful trips of *Sindbad the Sailor* between Bagdad and the cities of India, of his journey on a raft through a mountain to the domains of the King of the Indies and his return, with presents to *Haroun-al-Raschid,* his lord in Bagdad. There are many reasons for believing that *Sindbad* was

Route of the German Bagdad Railway, designed to realize the ambitions of Germany for World Empire; important position of Bagdad, Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf as obstacles in the way of the Kaiser's schemes.

a real person. Certainly his occupation was a real one, for when India became a colony of England, one of the first steps of the new government was to encourage and protect trade between her new charge and the renowned city of Bagdad.

Away back in the days when the first New England colonies were just starting, a British force was fighting the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf. That was the beginning. Not many months ago a British force entered Bagdad.

About half a century after England's arrival in the gulf, Turkey moved her border down through Mesopotamia to the top of the Persian Gulf. There was no opposition to this. One look at the country was enough to bring the British sailors in the gulf to the conclusion that Mesopotamia was a place for Turks, or for wandering Arabs, not for them.

England's task was to get rid of the hostile powers in the gulf and to keep peace there, that there might be trade between India and Persia and Bagdad. Little did it matter who owned Mesopotamia. No one saw ahead two hundred years to the ambitions of a Pan-German monarch.

In 1622, by a treaty with the Shah of Persia, England took up the burden of keeping men-of-war in the Persian Gulf. Persia, with its soil rich in mineral deposits, its great endless plateaus and its high natural sea wall on the east side of the Persian Gulf, gained through British ousting of Portuguese and Dutch, her only harbor and outlet to the world. To the west of the gulf lay Arabia, the home of countless wandering tribes, neither governing nor governed. Above the gulf, between these two countries—no one knows just where the borders are—lay Mesopotamia, the land "between the rivers." As time went on there still arose no occasion for England to be interested in the future of that blighted country. The right of trade through it was important, but that country which controlled the Persian Gulf controlled the important part, the trade route between the Tigris and the rest of the world. All the rest of Turkey faced the Bosphorus, but Mesopotamia faced south.

The British men-of-war and the British flag became more and more objects of respect both to Persians and to Arabs. There is no cause to

question England's right to what she had. It was not land, it was influence. It was the British policy of give and take. She gave Persia her seaboard; she made trade safer; she claimed in return for her work not land but the right to police the gulf in every nook and corner. She could have claimed this right, and more, as conqueror of the Portuguese and the Dutch, yet she asked it in return for a service. She paid for the "wedge" in the gulf with men, with ships and with patient labor. And policing was no joke. Barbary pirates were polished gentlemen in comparison with the wily Arabs who infested the gulf waters and the waters just outside, along the coast of Baluchistan and India. If the Arabian coast had been designed specially for the pirates' purpose, it could not have been better made. All along the coast lagoons, natural breakwaters in front of sheltered harbors, were secluded hiding places where the pirate boats could rest unnoticed till the time should come for a sally. It was a wild and exciting life that these fellows led. Hardy as the Viking explorers, they braved, not the icy storms of the north sea, but the parching blasts of the

Arabian wind and the cruel rays of the desert sun. On a day I spent in the gulf not long ago, during the twelve day-hours from six to six, the shade temperature never got below 100 degrees and rose to 121. We must give credit to the men who manned the British patrol in the gulf during all seasons, wet, dry, chilly, and blazing hot. But in spite of their efforts the piracy became greater and greater. It was discouraging—but for the sake of her trade and of order England kept up the good fight. The Arabs, oppressed by the Turks on two sides, from Egypt and from Mesopotamia, were becoming more organized. One tribe, the Wahabis, proved itself master, and the Arabs, coming together under their leadership, could cease fighting among themselves on land and spend their time in plundering people of other races and nations on the sea.

During the years of our War of Independence and the French Revolution, while so much of world importance was happening in Europe and America, there were British men-of-war putting down piracy in this mysterious part of the world, the Persian Gulf. On into the nineteenth century

they fought it, but still it continued and increased. It finally developed into more than piracy, into absolute warfare. A great fleet of pirate vessels, with their cut-throat pirates seven thousand strong, set out to ravage not only the sea but the coasts. At this most startling turn of affairs a large force of British troops went to the gulf. To-day, on the colors of that force, is blazoned the word "Arabia" for that tussle with the Arab pirates. Tommies were policemen then. Another century and the shores of Arabia would see them as soldiers in the Great War.

Aggressive measures, thus begun, gradually put an end to the whole business, and treaties between England and the Arab chiefs not only put a stop to the piracy, but gave England the official status of protector of the Persian Gulf, with rights in the disposal of the lands on its coasts. Thus, finally, a quarter of a century before the Great War began, England's constant guardianship of the Persian Gulf for more than two hundred years, to the great benefit of both Arabia and Persia, was officially as well as unofficially rewarded. Her "wedge" in the gulf was a respected fact.

But where was Turkey all this time? Turkey had not thought far ahead either. To her the lower Mesopotamia region was not worth a great deal of bother. She could collect taxes from the native inhabitants only as far as her guns could reach to conquer the Arab tribes; and the possible taxes, except from the date trees, were not worth a great deal of sacrifice. Turkey's "squeeze" method of government was of little use where there was little to be squeezed. On the routes of the big Mohammedan pilgrimages the system was profitable enough, for the officials could block the roads to the sacred shrines and take away whatever money the travelers had—if the Arab highwaymen on the road had left them any. But the possible tolls were slight near the Persian Gulf. There has always been a close race between the Turkish officials and the Arab highwaymen, and in many cases the officials, by putting their posts far enough ahead along the roads, have beaten out the Arabs. It is a good illustration of the German philosophy of the survival of the fittest.

One of the Turkish governors was so indifferent to Mesopotamia south of Bagdad that he was will-

ing England should take it off his hands, if she would. But England refused. If she could only have pictured the Kaiser of a few years later! Perhaps the British wedge would have reached up to Bagdad.

But the chance was gone. The moves of Turkey and Germany, with ideas of greater depth than anyone imagined, were about to commence. A few years after the first great treaty between the British and the Arab chiefs, the new Vali of Bagdad, the Turkish governor of the District, marched a good-sized army through Mesopotamia and started after the Arabian towns on the shore of the Persian Gulf. England was overlord of the gulf and hers was the power of disposal of lands on the Arabian and Persian shores. But she objected little to this extension of Turkey's realm. It seemed unimportant, in view of the fact that the Arabs would not acknowledge Turkish overlordship except with Turkish guns under their noses. But attempts at expansion which followed were fought a little more strenuously, though even then there appeared to be no great international problems at stake.

With the accession of William II to the German throne a new light appeared on the situation. Out of a most casual difference between Turkey and England developed a colossal struggle. If the British were not interested in Mesopotamia, the Kaiser was. A route through Mesopotamia to the Persian Gulf would be a quick way of getting to India and would give a chance to rush something serious down that way in a very short time. The great "open highway" across the country to the east would be a fact. It would balance England's advantage in the Suez Canal. The Pan-German plan was just getting under way. Slowly but surely the time was coming when the little British wedge in the Persian Gulf should become the great kink in the Pan-German plan for world conquest.

With the visit of the Emperor to Constantinople in 1889 began the war against the British in Mesopotamia. For years it had been concealed; now it was in the open, but fruitless.

The plans of the Kaiser were deep. England was in a little difficulty with Turkey over the war in Egypt, relations between the two countries

were not too good in the Persian Gulf, and the Sultan was quite ready to ally himself, or sell himself, to Germany for the rich rewards which would come from the Kaiser's schemes. As Defender of Islam and protector of the Turkish throne, Emperor William was master of Turkey. Turkey needed cultivation, especially the part of Turkey known as Mesopotamia. A railway through there would do wonders. It would also be a boon to India. The slogan, "Hamburg to the Persian Gulf," grew in popularity as the realization came of the true purpose—"Berlin to Bombay and Cairo." The Kaiser had no more idea of cultivating Mesopotamia than he had of cultivating mumps. Two of his spokesmen belied any statement he might make concerning that: "Germany has no resources in men for opening the Islamic world," and "Turkey can never raise enough settlers." Nor had he thought out any plan for the coöperative control of a railway between Europe and British India that would attempt to be fair to all nations. But he did have a very definite idea that with an army on rails at its back, a stronghold at the head of the Persian Gulf

would be a great base of operations toward the east. His submarines could renew all the piracy of the Arabs, and on a much larger scale.

The affair began modestly enough. The obscure individual who went to set up a small pearl business in the Persian Gulf raised very little stir, even though he was a German. But a few years later came the startling news that Germany had obtained a concession to build a railway from "Konia to the Persian Gulf," 1,870 miles from Constantinople. It would indeed be a fine thing to have another railway through Asia, and especially in this part. Asia has few enough railways as it is.

But there was certainly something queer about the plans of the aforesaid concession. It was curious that, if the railway were for commercial reasons, the proposed route across should carefully leave out all the regions which gave promise of being agricultural districts and go by the shortest possible route across the barest desert. Curious, too, that any bank should advance money in such an enterprise unless said bank had the sanction of a great government to back it up. Accord-

ing to the plans a German bank was to furnish the funds. The Turkish government was to pay back the money with interest and also to pay a guaranty on the cost of construction at the rate of 700 pounds per year per kilometer. Considering the fact that Turkey was at the time bankrupt and that the Sultan would have no means of paying the guaranty alone, not to mention the original funds with interest, it seemed as though there must be something bigger than a railway scheme behind it. Indeed there was. Germany was going to see to it that no matter what might happen in the West, the East would ultimately decide supremacy. The old wars of the ages, from the beginning of empires, over control of the East, was to culminate, according to the wishes of Germany, in conquest for the Teutons.

It was hoped by Germany that the duty charges on goods sent over the line would in time bring into the Turkish treasury from England, which was the chief trader with the East, enough to pay for the line. But in the meantime Germany would become possessor of the land through which the railway would run. By the clever ruse of a rail-

way she would annex practically all Asia Minor, Palestine and Mesopotamia, perhaps Persia. A railway would certainly be a good thing—but not on those terms.

While the plans were being formed and made known to the world, the petty merchant in the Persian Gulf was being followed by other Germans; some scientists, some engineers looking for a good terminus for the railway, some representatives of rich German firms in hopes of buying property on the gulf. Then came attempts to prove the Turkish ownership of lands in the gulf, since Turkey wished to sell the lands to Germany. Finally came attempts by the Turkish government to take more land from the Arabs along the coast, both by force and by paying Arabs to act as German agents.

Every attempt to get land by force failed because of the presence of British men-of-war. Every attempt to get land by stealth failed because of the gratitude of the Arabs to England, the power that had so long been the patient guardian of order in the gulf. It speaks well for England's actions in the gulf that every one of the

Arab Sheikhs at the head of the districts which Germany was trying by all manner of means to acquire, stood firm by Great Britain and refused to let any land go without her consent.

When this failed, the next move was to make the affair an international contest, to challenge England's right to predominate influence in the gulf, and to make a supposed transgression of German "rights" a case for international discussion. England, some years before, had secured the right of trade up the Tigris, and the Lynch Brothers were carrying on a prosperous trade between Busra and Bagdad. Against this Germany started a line of trade with the Persian Gulf. The Hamburg-American line ran some boats to the gulf, treating all the nation's head-men to music and wine—to win them heartily to Germany. Even these means failing to give her control in the gulf, Germany played the last card, the card that has worked so successfully with other nations since the outbreak of the war. She put the matter in the hands of the big diplomats of the countries; disguising the important matters as unimportant, sliding through agreements before their real sig-

nificance could be grasped, proposing, under pretext of playing a square game with Turkey, a plan that meant nothing but the helping of Germany, Turkey's master. Perhaps if the British guardians in the gulf were too alert for any underhand work to succeed, the diplomats in London, so far away, might be more easily influenced. Fortunately nothing was signed before war broke out. Even a few days' delay in the declaration of war might have told. From the job-trader in pearls to the deep-dyed plottings of villain diplomats, every sort of German intrigue had been tried.

In the meantime the railway was being built. The section from Bagdad to Samarra was just completed. Enough materials were piled up at Busra to run a line across the Persian frontier and enable the troops of Germany's vassals to move against India.

Germany in India! Germany in Egypt! The very thoughts make one shudder. The first year of the war would require nearly all of the troops in India to help on the western front. India bled white, northern Persia turning to Germany, the

effect of an attack on either India or Egypt might be disaster unthinkable. What a chance for intrigue in the Far East Germany would have with a line straight from Hamburg to the Bay of Bengal—and just across the Pacific lay America!

But with the war came a little British camp on the island of Bahrein, not so very far from Busra. Was that little camp a part of the World War? Indeed it was—and a much more important part than it thought. It was starting something more than a war between Tommies and Turks. The British Empire was at war with the German Empire to maintain England's right to her position in the East and to vouchsafe to India and Egypt the liberty and peace gained through the strong protecting arm of Great Britain. In the land where Assyria and Babylon fought for the mastery of the East, where a Caliph of Bagdad claimed allegiance from the great wall of China to the Atlantic, now Turks and Arabs, as tools of Germany, were to contend against the power of England—her navy, her British troops, and her dusky warriors of India.

Yet this was not to be like the war in France. There is all the difference between war in France and war in Mesopotamia that there is between Paris and Bagdad.

CHAPTER II

TRAGEDY—ACT I, PART 1—BRILLIANT SUCCESS

It was October of 1914 when the brigade from Poona pitched camp on the island of Bahrein. War between England and Turkey was not declared until the following month. To the men there, waiting to move into Mesopotamia, life was interesting enough. They were in the very center of the greatest pearl industry in the world. The pearls from all over the great pearl bank of the Persian Gulf came on the clumsy old dhows to the snug little island in behind a neck of the Arabian shore. It was fine to watch the Arabs at their work, and to get used to their life. They looked just like the characters of the Old Testament and time seemed to turn back twenty centuries. Perhaps some of these fellows were Wise Men or Prophets.

Some of the more imaginative of the officers of the brigade looked forward with a curious thrill

to fighting in the land where once the heads of the world's great empires of the East led their armies. And they seemed to feel a peculiar satisfaction in the thought that Bagdad was in that land. They were wont to look over the blue water of the gulf and see in the mist that hung between the waves and the clouds all sorts of beautiful pictures of golden Bagdad, with glistening domes, and palaces, and richly dressed ladies of court.

Most of these twentieth-century soldiers, however, were too prosaic for any such thoughts as these. They saw nothing in the patter of the dreamer who found so much to think about in this land of the dim past. Their care was for the present. Their only interest was the daily practicing for the landing in boats on the shores of Mesopotamia. They were thinking of the hardships that awaited them in Mesopotamia. The thunderstorms in the gulf were bad enough. They knew that the country was just one vast plain where nothing grew except shrubs, and these only here and there along the banks of the two winding, muddy rivers that wriggled through the land like two snakes through a deserted field. Because

there was nothing growing there were continually terrific dust storms, swooping over the plains, sped on by the burning winds. This they knew. Imagination was a fine thing in the cool evenings with the wonderful Eastern sunsets; but with the hot sun shining down on the Arabian island, fact won the day. Mesopotamia, by common consent, was to be hot and dry and dusty and miserable.

At Bahrein the peaceful native people at their labor of pearls certainly made war seem far away. Perhaps there would not be war with Turkey after all. But things were moving faster in other parts of the world. Turkey, as vassal of Germany and as official overlord of Mesopotamia, was about to make trouble; not, perhaps, because she wanted to, but because it was the Kaiser's will.

The British subjects in Busra and Bagdad were getting nervous about staying where they were. Many of them got away. Some from Busra got to Mohamera, the big station of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, where they were safe on Persian soil. Then word came that at Constantinople the British representative had asked for his passports and that no more British subjects would be al-

lowed to leave Busra or Bagdad. That really looked serious. The British gunboat *H. M. S. Espiegle,* lying in the Shat-al-Arab near the oil works, stripped for action with her six four-inch guns. It was none too soon. From the council halls of Europe war was declared between England and Turkey.

The curtain rolled up at the word "war." On receipt of a radio-message from India the force on the island of Bahrein broke camp, embarked and entered the stage. The declaration of war came on November fifth. The force stepped on the stage on the sixth, at the mouth of the Shat-al-Arab, the estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates.

The first glimpse of the desert land was a complete surprise. On both sides of the winding river were masses of beautiful palm trees, marshes and shrubs. "It's the garden of Eden, sure enough," said one of the young officers. "Look at the trees. Who said it was all desert?" "Desolate" surely could not be the word to use for that inviting shore. Palms grew in perfect lines out from the river, about two miles. Between each two lines was a small canal leading the water in from the

river. Once in a while the boats passed an opening in the forests of palms. Through the space could be seen bare flat plains, stretching far away from the river, past the fringe of palms, it seemed, to very eternity. It was indeed lovely. But other, less imaginative men were scanning all the land in sight for signs of Turkish forts, of guns, or of troops. To them it was no time to wonder about the scenery. They had a part to play.

A few Turkish guns were in position near the mouth of the Shat-al-Arab. A strenuous bombardment soon silenced them. A little way up the river, past a few of the bends, at the little town of Fao, was a Turkish fort, built many years before when Turkey first came to the gulf with serious intentions. It was just a wee structure which to all appearances might have been a fort built by some boys in the sand at the seashore. It seemed like a toy war that this brigade was starting; almost as ridiculous as though the armies had decided to fight with pop guns.

Not even the most pessimistic of those men present at the first encounter had the slightest idea that it would cost England so much in men

and money to finish the campaign that began with the leveling of the little mud fort at Fao. The guns of the small fleet had accomplished that task in short order. Some six hundred men with a section of artillery landed to clinch the victory at Fao, and the flotilla of transports and gunboats steamed farther up the river. As the landed troops watched them go up stream they might well have asked, "Are they going to Bagdad?"

The advance had begun; and no one could say where it would stop. The very first necessity was to protect the top of the gulf and that part of Persia where the great oil supply flowed through pipes to the refinery on the Shat-al-Arab. A blow at that line by the Turks would mean the destruction of works that had cost tremendously in money and men.

A Persian company first sunk a million pounds in the oil business. It soon found that it cost ten pounds to transport over the endless hills and plains the oil that would have to sell for four pounds. When that company went up in smoke, an English capitalist undertook the good work. Under the direction of an expert engineer, three

hundred and sixty miles of pipe line were laid to convey the oil from the naphtha fields in north Persia, over the mountains of Luristan, across the arid wastes of Aribistan to the ports of Mohamera and Abidan. It took patience and courage to complete the undertaking after the failure of the Persian firm; and the line was worth protecting now. It had benefited the people and the government of Persia more than they knew. The seven thousand employees at the refining works would need considerable protection. The little gunboat *Espiegle* was at its post to protect the terminus of the pipe at Mohamera and Abidan. But it would do little good to protect the end of the line and let the rest be cut to pieces by Turks and Arabs.

Two more brigades arrived on November 14 to reënforce the one already operating, making the British force of occupation one division under the command of General Barrett. Nothing was occupied as yet, but the advance to Busra was made in a few days. A most curious sort of advance it was. The Turks' resistance soon broke and they made for the "date town" with their pursuers hot after them, fighting in the woods of date

palms, in the marshes and on the plains. The boats on the river increased the speed of the rout, by dropping a few shells in from the side. The men on the gunboats soon found that their guns were the only ones in action. How strange that the land batteries should stop when there was such a good harvest in store for their shells! The explanation, made clear at last, was that though the enemy was plainly visible from the high decks of the steamer the retreating Turks were completely concealed from the eyes of the British on land by the mirage, that fiend of the desert. The palms seemed to be growing in the air and to rise and fall like the side of a great bellows. As for the Turks, they neither rose nor fell. They were nowhere.

There was a great celebration in Busra at the changing of governors. The dignitaries met the commanders of the force and a lengthy proclamation of good intentions followed. The German Consul and five other Germans were shipped to India. Even Arabs, after experiencing Turkish rule for a short time, were glad to see the greedy governors and officials leave. The townspeople

lined the banks of the only good canal that remains to the "Venice of the East" and joined in the hearty welcome to the force that had rid them of the unspeakable Turk. Some of the Arabs had joined in the sport of war while the advance to Busra was on, by deserting from their supposed places in the Turkish army and plundering the Turkish wounded as they fell on the field.

Soon after the first of December Kurna met the fate of Busra. A unique fleet aided in the capture of Kurna. As there were few gunboats available, Arab scows, "mahailas" and "ballams," big, clumsy boats that might have belonged to the cave-man period, were pressed into the service. With iron plates on the sides and across the top, these ancient hulls became armored cruisers. But this queer-looking fleet did its work well and Kurna fell with but few casualties. Kurna is about thirty miles by river north of Busra. The Euphrates used to join the Tigris at this place, though now only a small stream from the Euphrates enters here and the main current flows into the Tigris at Busra. With both these junctures of the two rivers taken, the British could

The highway of Busra, the "Venice of the East"

(*From a photograph by Mr. Weir Stewart*).

Arab huts on the bank of the Tigris

(*From a photograph by Mr. Weir Stewart*).

control both rivers and make Busra doubly safe. Likewise the Kurun River in Persia, along which the pipe line was laid, might be guarded more easily. A force stretched along that river as far as Ahwaz. Busra, the gulf and the oil-line were safe.

The days of December were not like those of summer, and there were no stoves. It was cold and damp and disagreeable, there at Kurna. The Arab belief that at that very spot was the Garden of Eden seemed to have little application to the barren, shivery spot where the force pitched camp. It might have been accepted down near Busra, where there were beautiful date groves, but near the camp of the British at Kurna there was nothing but barren plain. Everybody called it desert—for nothing grew but the bristly kind of stubble that insists upon growing where nothing else can live.

Early one morning, when it was cold and felt like rain, a Tommy from London, a "pucca Cockney," gingerly slid out of his blankets to perform his morning task of stewing up a Dixie of tea. "Brrr——" he said and shook all over. He looked

around at the bleak landscape; nothing but dirt, and a little mud, to be seen. He kicked a chum who was sleeping on the ground at his feet. "Say! Call this the Garden of Heden? If this was the blumin' Garden of Heden hi don't blame the twelve hapostles for gittin' out of it." A confused jumble of words built on the dominant "bloody" came from some part of the blanket that was kicked for the sake of giving utterance to this bit of wisdom.

That kind of weather is not designed for comfort, nor is it conducive to a desire to sit still. Just a move for the sake of moving is enough. Besides, the Turks were beaten easily enough. Why not straf them some more?

But the experiences of the Egyptian campaign had taught the authorities in London a few lessons about desert warfare. One of them was that once you start into an open country, especially such a country as Mesopotamia, where the fighting has to follow several rivers, it is hard to know where to stop. The objectives are liable to be indefinite. "A safe game must be played in Mesopotamia." That was the note struck in London

at the start of the Mesopotamia campaign. A safe game meant occupation and defense. That was already accomplished. It seemed that everything that brought the force to Mesopotamia was finished. Would that the play could have ended here with the assurance that the force lived happily and heartily ever after! For the sake of the killed and wounded, would that it had ended here!

But Ahwaz was far from Bagdad. So were Busra and Kurna. During the month of March some savage attacks by the Turks showed that the sting of the British blow in Mesopotamia was keenly felt somewhere, probably in Berlin. An attack toward the pipe line in Persia, not far from Ahwaz, by 12,000 Turks, and an attack at Shaiba from Busra by 1,500 Turk horsemen, "put the wind up the British." It was clear that they had started the defense of the pipe line none too soon. It looked as though it would be necessary to take a position still farther up the river to make the possessions really safe.

Another British division landed at Busra. The force was fast growing. Sir Arthur Barrett, commander in chief in Mesopotamia, being ill, handed

over the command to Sir John Nixon. A new name was now at the top of the list of characters for the side show. But Sir John Nixon already knew the stage and the scenery. His father had been at one time Consul-General at Bagdad.

The campaign which he set himself to carry out was "to take active measures against the enemy." That might suggest any far-off goal, limited only by the stretch of the imagination. The words from London came like writing on the wall—"A safe game must be played in Mesopotamia."

In accordance with that warning the slogan of the force should have been, "We'll hold back the Turks at any cost." But the fever to "get on with it" was fast growing. The slogan was becoming, "We'll beat back the Turks wherever they are." That sounded dangerous. Starting out on three rivers to beat up the Turks is a considerable task, hardly in sympathy with the warning from home. At that very critical time in the war there was no prospect of having a large number of reënforcements to draw upon. The request for troops to fight in the Dardanelles had been refused. What chance had the Mesopotamia side

The stage for the Mesopotamia "show."

show of getting more troops? With the Kaiser so busy in France and Russia a small force at the head of the Persian Gulf would be able to hold back what little strength he could use in that part of the world. "At the head of the Persian Gulf" sounded all right, but the force was already a long way above that and ready for another move.

The aggressive spirit of the Mesopotamia force was soon rewarded by brilliant victories. The first object of its spirit was Amara, eighty-five miles along the winding river north of Kurna. The attack on Amara was so unusual as to be comical. It was decided to have as large a fleet as possible to act with the land force on the march. The gunboat *Comet* and three tugs formed the fleet. The ordinary use of the tugs was transporting supplies, but they served well enough as men-of-war if there need be little fighting. The advance began, time had slipped around to June and the scorching days of summer were setting in. With the mosquitos and the sand fleas, burning wind and pests of flies, the force felt indeed as though it were being driven out of the Garden of Eden.

There was heavy fighting on the way to Amara.

Again the fighting was disturbed by the beastly mirage. Suddenly a caravan behind appeared to be walking in the air. Mud villages of the Arabs rose and fell as though on a rolling sea. A shimmery lake appeared in the distance—only to disappear or gradually move away. But the Turks were again routed. Urged on by the victory and by the spirit of adventure, the flotilla of tugs pushed on past the land force. This little fleet has become famous as the victorious "Townshend's Regatta." With the troops a day's march behind, the flotilla arrived at Amara. Most of the boats would have failed the simplest test as fighting ships. I have been told that two of them could not have shot over the bank, their guns were mounted so low. They could have shot at some birds in the air or men standing right on the bank of the river but that would not take the town.

Nevertheless, the British Command boldly demanded that the Turks at Amara surrender. The news of the rout of the army down the river had reached the town and the whole town garrison of seven hundred men surrendered rather than venture into another bit of confusion with this

strange-looking fleet. What the tugs were to do with those seven hundred men was a question. The embarrassment of having prisoners and no force to take care of them grew as the day went on. The land force was still far away. There were some nervous hours for the men on the boats as they waited for the pursuing army to reach Amara. Suppose something should go wrong! But with Townshend things did not go wrong. The Turks, as they looked at the little tugs, were beginning to itch to raid them instead of sitting aimlessly as prisoners, when their friends on the retreat began to fall back to the town, and the victorious British army appeared. The "warship" commanders breathed a sigh of relief when the surrendered garrison were marched to the rear. It had been an exciting day.

In the advance to Amara over two thousand prisoners were taken and as the British officers in their new mess halls sat around talking over the eventful days, there were few who were not of the opinion that the little force on the Tigris could tackle any task whatever. Again the warning came, "A safe game must be played in Meso-

potamia." The force at the new British town of Amara were in a mood to laugh at that warning. If they had been less respectful perhaps some of them would have laughed.

The next objective was the town of Nasarie, on the Euphrates. The capture of this town would make Busra still safer and would give to the British the main position on the Euphrates. From the political point of view the capture of the town would be very important, for from there the Arabs on the Euphrates might be influenced to loyalty to the British. Arabs everywhere clung to the Turks because of the tie of Mohammedanism, but were very glad to be rid of them as overlords. The trouble between the Arabs and the Turks near Mecca, across the Arabian desert, was under way. The demand for a free Arabia was growing. The Arabs looked to England to help them as she had helped Egypt. Every district of Arabia drawn to England weakened the war strength of the Turks. It would be well to have Nasarie, on the Euphrates.

A little over a month after the brilliant capture of Amara, Nasarie fell, with almost as many pris-

oners as were taken at Amara, and a dozen Turkish guns. Nasarie lay at the southern end of the river Hai. Once the main current of the Tigris but now a small river, the Hai was a connecting link between the Tigris and the Euphrates. It brought a small amount of the water of the Tigris down to the Euphrates, to join the Tigris again at Kurna and Busra. At the northern end of the little stream lay Kut-al-Amara and at Kut-al-Amara was the Turkish general Nur-ed-din, the "Light of the Faith." It would surely be wise to take Kut, now that the lower part of the river Hai was in British hands.

So it went. German schemes against Busra and the oil supply had led to Kurna and Ahwaz. Kurna and Ahwaz led to Amara and Nasarie. Now Nasarie and the river Hai pointed straight to Kut and the Turk Nur-ed-din. Suppose Kut fell—and there was every reason to believe that the spirit which took Amara and Nasarie would succeed at Kut—what would Kut point to? There was only one place for it to point—Bagdad. The heat grew worse and life became a burden. This was no toy war now.

CHAPTER III

TRAGEDY—ACT I, PART 2—THE ADVANCE TOWARD BAGDAD

Camp at Amara was getting settled. Lieutenant H—— walked into his mess anteroom, once the office of a Turkish official, in the mud-brick officers' quarters on the river front. His eyes were swollen with the heat and the burning dust that was blowing over the plains. His light khaki drill shorts and shirt were wringing wet with perspiration. He threw off his sun helmet and fell limp into a chair. "Got a letter today," he said, "from the lady. She says she's glad we are away out in Mesopotamia where we do not have to suffer the tortures of the French front." He looked around at his fellow officers who were lounging in the room, trying to keep cool. They all understood what he was thinking about and nodded approval. "I suppose," he went on, "that people home think we are just here on sort of a picnic, straffing the

Turks for exercise. I wouldn't mind the beastly job if it weren't so thankless. Imagine being glad we are escaping the tortures of the French front with the temperature inside the tents a hundred and ten and everybody being laid up with fever or sunstroke or something! Perhaps the lady pictures me dressed in the Sultan's best robes and sitting in the middle of a court with dark-skinned lackeys to fan me all day long and nothing to do but drink coffee and smoke my hubble-bubble, like these bally Arabs. We're not in Bagdad yet."

"Yet——" that is significant. A while before there would have been no idea of ever actually being in Bagdad. Now it seemed only a matter of time.

"But we can't kick, at that," said one of the loungers. "It may be hot, but it's a lot better to have a war out here in the deserts where you can't hurt anything than to have to fight over the beautiful villages of France. If there's got to be war it might as well be here. If they ran the whole war out here we could all go home at the end and find our homes just as we left them."

He was dead right. The show that they had

started in Mesopotamia was an ideal war. It was like two schoolboys going out into a vacant lot far away from the crowd and having it out in a real good scrap. Passing by all the towns on the Tigris and Euphrates without dropping a single shell into them, the forces there were doing all their fighting out in the plains where there was nothing to hurt; and where there were no villages to leave in ruins and no villagers but the wandering Arabs, who were always far out of danger.

From that point of view, war in Mesopotamia appeals to us all. I have been through peaceful France and have loved it as everyone who loves beauty must. The ridges of hills, the pretty winding streams flowing between beautiful green banks dotted with wild flowers, have brought to me that joy that nature's perfect beauty brings. The endless rows of rich farms and quaint little farmhouses, the white, smooth roads lined with tall green trees, perhaps in the road a donkey cart jogging along following a peasant to market, and then the villages, groups of inviting houses in a maze of green—that is the lovable country of

France. War has changed all that, wherever it has gone.

The ridges and valleys are masses of shell craters now. The banks of the streams are lines of trenches. The green of the trees has changed to a black char of scorched stumps. The pleasant towns and villages are heaps of broken walls and jumbles of ruins. Everyone knows what that means to the people who once lived their happy lives in the little towns of beautiful France. That is too awful to speak of. We must fight because of that.

But there is no chance for that ruin in Mesopotamia. War there is war in its simplest state. It stands out in bold outline against the horrors of the tumult in France. The ruins in France are the ruins of Prussian greed. There are no ruins in Mesopotamia but the ruins of time. The agony in France is the agony of ruined homes and ruined lives. There is little of that in Mesopotamia. It is still war, there, but it is war off in exile from the world, war without all the social evils of the western front and without all the inhumanness of Germany. On the western front there are war

implements which the world in its right mind will not tolerate. In Mesopotamia the war is a war of bullets, as it was many years ago. In the deserts there are no Germans, running wild in their brutality at the bidding of their war lords. There are atrocities even on the arid plains of Arabia, but they come from the people themselves, the bloodthirsty Arabs. It is war on the western front turned upside down. The devilish cruelties of war come not upon the people of the land, but from them.

Would that the whole war could be fought in the desert lands, where there can be no more ruins, where there are no beautiful towns and villages, where there are no beautiful streams and woods and hills and valleys, where the birds of our world never sing and where the beauties of the peaceful, innocent life of villages in France are not known! But no—the deserts are only for a side show. The main show goes steadily on over land that is meant for peace. We may find on the western front the exhibitions of strength and cunning, but in Mesopotamia we see war as we used to imagine it and get anew a faith that man is still human.

That is what was in the mind of the lady who wrote to her dear husband in Mesopotamia to say she was glad he could be there instead of in France.

And the thought spread. Amara began to seem quite livable after all. There was a chance for a fairly clean swim in the river in the cool of the evening. Several chaps got nipped by some sort of fish—they were sure it was Jonah's whale—but a chance to cool off was worth the risk. With the aid of a little sense of humor the antics of the Arabs alone were worth the price of admission.

The Arabs had some doubts about their new masters for a while. They hesitated to take the English paper money and there was a run on the field treasurer for silver. The Arabs cared little about the Indians and the feeling was reciprocated. The Indians felt far superior to mere Arabs. It was funny to see the grades of standing, from Arabs to Tommies. Some Arabs were walking along the bund by the river where there was room only for two or three abreast. A section of Indians of a coolie labor-corps approached them from the opposite direction. They might

have found room to pass, but no, the Arabs must jump down to the water to let the Indians have the whole bund. No sooner had the Indians kicked all the Arabs off the bund than there came along some Tommies leading a cart with some stores. Off went the Indians this time. The Arabs looked at the Indians and grinned. The Indians looked at the Arabs and scowled, and the Tommies noticed nothing.

The Indians felt grieved because the Arab "bazaar wallas" or merchants could not be bargained with as easily as the "bazaar wallas" in India, but they felt very much above them as part of the force. The Indian sentries felt a special pride in their position because they had orders to shoot an Arab at sight, after dark.

One fellow had an experience that made him a little doubtful of his superiority. It was a rather dark night, but in the dimness the sentry saw something moving, not far from camp. He shouted "Halt." The figure kept moving as though he did not hear. Again the Indian shouted, but the figure still moved along steadily. Then aiming in hopes of hitting it if it were an Arab

and missing it if it were not, he fired. The figure dropped. Trembling with excitement at the idea of being able to report that he had shot a *"budoo"* the Indian approached the spot where the figure had dropped. Nothing was stirring. He must have hit him. He walked nearer. Now he could make out the shape. It was a man in a huddled position.

Knowing no Arabic except the word *"Arabi"* and no English but the challenge, "Halt! Who goes there?" he gave that for the sake of the heap on the ground. Nothing stirred. The Arab was surely dead. Convinced that he had a prize, the sentry walked forward and in his glee was about to kick the dead man when up got the Arab, seized the gun from the Indian, and made across the desert, never again to be seen.

I ran into some Tommies one day who were having out some of the old stories about the first days of the campaign. Their tales of the exploits of the Arabs were enough to recommend the fellows to a circus. "I woke up one night and thought I'd been touched," I heard one say. "In a deep voice I says, 'Who's there?' There wasn't

anything movin' so I thought I'd take my rifle an' see if there was anything up. I felt under me, for I was sleepin' on the thing, but it wasn't there. I thought mebbe I'd moved in my sleep, so I felt over toward my chum on the right to make sure. By mistake I stuck my hand in his face and by the variety of his cussin' I knew I was in the right place. 'Have you seen my gun?' I says, but he hadn't anything more to say about the blinkin' rifle than he had for the punch in the face. Then all of a sudden he let out a shout and says, 'Where's mine!' We knew there was something up then an' we woke up the rest of the chaps. There was nine of us in the tent and nine rifles missing. Most of us had 'em under us too. We never did find the bally loose-wallas."

"Our Brigade Commander was peacefully snoring in his tent one night," said another, "when suddenly it takes legs and skoots off out of sight. The loose-wallas had already taken all his kit and uniform, but not content with that they got away with his blinkin' tent, poles an' all. The General never woke up. Next mornin' he was around in the worn-out duds of Captain K——.

It was a treat to see him. The uniform fitted him where it touched him."

I can easily believe any story I may hear about the Arabs as thieves and I am most happy that there are not many of them in the other countries of the world. During the year I was among them, there was plenty of proof that nothing was beyond the sly fellows. Always barefoot, always prowling around, they seemed to have as part of their make-up the knack of getting away with stolen goods. I do not wonder that the people of Bagdad believed in genii.

The Arabs live in villages that disappear as completely as the things they steal. Now you see them and now you don't. The river never gives them a chance to cultivate the land without going to a lot of trouble and it is easier to wander and steal. When the river falls they have to pull the water up in goatskin bags, over pulleys, and when the river is in flood they have to build bunds to save their scanty crops. So most of them give it up, live on cucumbers and a kind of bread made from grain that will grow almost anywhere, and wander with their sheep and what cattle they may

have. When they settle, they live in their little mud huts or tents made of skin and whatever canvas they can get from stolen tents; and when it is time to move, pack up their donkeys, drive along their cattle and pitch camp somewhere else.

Every time they wander they get more wild. The men gradually drift away from their families to join bands that go in for robbery on a large scale. These bands kept some of the force at Amara busy acting as posses. If there was a chance, the bands would break through the line of communication along the river and attack in force some slightly isolated camp. A small detail of mounted troops that was riding outside the line of communication, one night, found to its surprise that it was being surrounded by a much larger band of Arabs. They were out looking for Arabs, but not for Arabs in such force. Luckily they got away and managed to do a little damage to the Arabs. They escaped terrible punishment, for the bloodthirsty Arabs have no pity on the victims who fall into their hands.

The time was not far off when the fighting against the plundering and the thieving of Arabs

was to give place to more fighting of Turks. The rumor of a move from Amara to Kut was growing. There were Jews from Bagdad in Amara, who through some mysterious means, received the news that the Turks were expecting the British to make a stab for Bagdad. They said confidentially that the British had better hurry up.

To take Kut, the strong Turkish position about a hundred miles up the river from Amara, ought to mean Bagdad. If the Turks could be routed at Kut they could be kept on the run all the way. As the rumor spread, the excitement spread, and the force was anxious to "get on with it." The thought of the great victories at Amara and Nasarie called for more victories like them. Everyone was confident.

Finally the orders came. They meant Kut. The weather was still "hell," or perhaps worse. Thanks to the cautiousness of the Turks, they were far up the river in good positions. There was no opposition on the march and General Townshend, at the head of the force, moved slowly toward Kut. A hasty march, those sweltering days at the end of August, would have meant hundreds of deaths

from heat. The cooler weather, especially in the evenings of September, was a big relief. There was something of "fight" in the air.

On one of those fine clear twilights that come only in such a barren country as Mesopotamia, the force was encamped four miles from the Turks. Seven miles farther on lay Kut, the city that controlled the Hai. Between the first line of Turks and Kut lay miles of strong trenches on both sides of the river. To take those one after another seemed an impossible task. But not for a strategist, and such was General Townshend. It appealed to the red-blooded fighter who had had so many brilliant victories and had met so many difficult situations, always with the same indomitable spirit. Both on the Nile and in South Africa Townshend had shown himself in every sense a soldier and a general. Here was a chance he loved. He could use his cavalry, he could use his sweeping flank attacks, but above all he could use his head.

In his camp, now, there were some who had seen service in France. The war had been going on for a year and was getting to be an old story. One

man, whom I afterward met, reached the Tigris front about the time of the march to Kut. He was still fresh enough from the other front to be using the expressions that are common parlance in France but never heard of in Mesopotamia. He often complained that there were no "nice farm houses," that there were no peasants around to try his French on, and no nice "barns" for billets. But when the time came for action his tune changed. "I thought the world had gone back on the good old fighting," he would say, "but Mespot has redeemed it. I used to lie awake in France thinking of the fighting of the old days. I would doze off and dream of a wild dash across a bare battlefield!—a rout of the enemy—surrounding them—then I would wake up in a sweat to find that we were still holding the same bit of trench, that we still had no rumor of a move. This kind of war out here is *the* style. My! a man gets a real chance here; a chance to use his head, a chance for the cleverest kind of strategy. I'd stick any kind of climate for this."

Everyone knew that the General would find a way to win. Everyone was game. Nothing stirred

till everything was ready. Then it was up and away like a shot. Orders said to proceed across the river to the south bank and attack the trenches there. There was something between the lines of that order. Everyone had an idea what it might be. Some knew. The Turks were to be drawn over to the southern bank by a feint there. The force was then to cross back to the north bank and attack the Turks on the extreme northern flank. The bridge was padded with mud to deaden the sound.

A long day's bombardment with infantry attacks on the south bank had the desired effect. The Turks came over. During the night came the silent crossing. Every ear was waiting for reports that the Turks were crossing back too. They did not cross—the feint was a success. The chance at the flank had come at last. It was brilliant. The cavalry and armored cars hit it as though shot out of a cannon. Next to them came an infantry brigade. The rest of the infantry attacked nearer the river. The Turks fought well but they could not stand that onslaught. Much of their strength was on the other side of the river.

The flank collapsed. Now, behind the Turkish trenches the cavalry made for the river.

Suddenly, from the direction of Kut, came enemy reserves. Without a moment's hesitation the infantry and cavalry that had turned the flank made for the oncoming reserves. It was midday of the second day of continuous fighting—and hot—but on they went, thirst and fatigue entirely forgotten. They made for the Turks across land as open and flat as a billiard table. Then followed a terrific hand-to-hand encounter. It was strenuous, ghastly—but it was victorious. The Turkish force cut and ran. Kut-al-Amara was Townshend's prize.

On past the town he followed the fleeing enemy. Not till he was halfway to Bagdad did he stop for rest. Then everyone sat down to think a while. Things had moved very rapidly. It was time they took stock of the situation. Only a few months before the little force at Kurna was acting as a defense of the Busra territory and the oil refinery. Now here was a force nearly to Bagdad. The Turks were still on the run.

Before long General Townshend reported, "I

consider that on all military grounds we should consolidate our position at Kut." He had sent his airplanes ahead and had found out the strength of the Turks in Bagdad. He found he would need a larger force than he then had to beat them. He was keen to get on with it if the government wanted it, but felt it absolutely necessary to have two divisions for the attack, while he had but one, and that weakened from the strenuous fighting it had done and the effects of the summer heat.

At any rate Kut was in British hands. Both ends of the river Hai were out of the hands of Nur-ed-din. Why not stay at Kut? But just as Nasarie led to Kut, so Kut led to Bagdad. There were many advantages which would accrue from the capture of the sacred city. It would mean a heavy blow to the Turks and the Germans, with their eyes fixed and their hearts pinned on the Bagdad railway to India and Egypt. It would mean that quantities of Arab tribes hitherto loyal to Turkey would come over to loyalty to Great Britain, the new protector of the holy city of Bagdad. It would influence the Arabs in western

Arabia who were revolting against the rule of the Turks. It would influence the Mohammedans of India and Persia, especially those of the Shiah sect, and would bind both countries still closer in sympathy with England. It would mean the recovery of whatever might be lost in influence among the eastern peoples as a whole by the bungle at the Dardanelles. It would mean a severe blow to the armies of Turkey, as they would have to give up any attempts to advance in Persia or toward the Suez Canal.

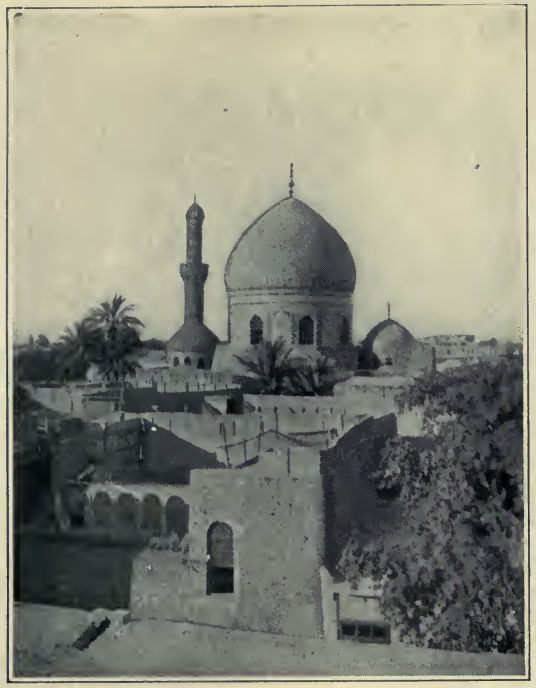
In view of the advantages of the capture, or even of an attack on the city, especially as it would effect the Dardanelles talk, the extreme cautiousness of the home government, which had followed the campaign thus far as a sort of haunting shadow, almost entirely disappeared.

After a great deal of discussion between the commander on the field, Sir John Nixon, the Indian government and the home government, that government sanctioned the advance if General Nixon felt confident. Of course he felt confident. "Audacity had accomplished wonders;

was there any limit to its possibilities?" In view of the wonders that audacity had accomplished, it would be hard to condemn resorting to it once again. The amount of transport, boats and carts, was frightfully small. But if everything went well there were enough boats for the advance. The home government would send out troops to hold Bagdad when once it was taken. One more plunge, a plunge "on into Bagdad at the heels of the rout," would just do the trick.

But unfortunately the Turkish retreat was not a rout. While the British force was encamped at Azizie, to get together and to rest, the Turks were intrenching in a strong position nine miles farther on, near the great old Arch of Persian Ctesiphon. The discussion over the advance had now consumed a month. With the order to advance, the camp broke up and the force that had done great things, the force that had shown the greatest possible gallantry and doggedness in the battles of the past few months, set out resolutely, confident in its commander, again to meet the Turks, this time to fight for Bagdad.

The first act was over. It had been splendid. Only the "writing on the wall"—"A safe game must be played in Mesopotamia"—gave any evidence that the second act might be less happy.



One of Bagdad's beautiful Mosques

(From a photograph by Mr. Leonard Dixon).

The arch of Ctesiphon, a ruin of Sassanian majesty

(From a photograph by Mr. Leonard Dixon).

CHAPTER IV

TRAGEDY—ACT II—THE DISASTER

Camp was pitched at Lajj, nine miles away from the Turkish first line. It was evening. Against the blood-red sky of the sunset the Arch of Ctesiphon stood out like a giant boat in a sunset sea. That old relic of Sassanian kings, the throne of the Chosroes, whose very name was a synonym of regal magnificence, had a new meaning that night. To get past that meant to get Bagdad. All the glory of the red sky, all the mystery of the ancient arch, conjured up weird thoughts of Bagdad, the royal city. Next day should tell whether the great old city of the Caliphs was to become British or remain a mud town of Turkish Pashas.

During the night the force broke camp and moved toward the spot where, in the sunset hours, had appeared that ghastly figure of the arch. It was bitter cold, one of those biting November

nights, and the thin khaki drill was little protection. There was little sleep, even during the hours of rest. The Turks were keeping their fires burning all night. Why, no one knew. Morning found most of the force in nullas or dried water channels. They were protections from the eyes of the Turks at least, if not from their shells. The cold of the night and the loss of sleep had added only a few shivers to the excitement. The tension was terrific. Victory meant that big arch. That would mean Bagdad. It was so near now.

Think of it—Bagdad! I have never been sure what there is about Bagdad which appeals so to us all. I suppose anything with a touch of royalty still makes our hearts beat faster, even in this democracy of ours. Then, too, Bagdad has come near to us all in the tales of the "Arabian Nights." But other names, of places we do not know at all, have the same sort of appeal. Mandalay, for instance, by its very sound, when put into all kinds of poems and songs, makes them popular.

The orders came. There was a great scrambling out of the trenches and nullas. Then a halt,

another advance, then a halt—a wait for something. It was not long in coming. It came in torrents, machine gun fire, rifle bullets and shells. There seemed to be a million guns concealed somewhere. Then the advance continued. The British artillery was now making itself felt. Over toward the right a mound in Turkish territory was getting a few of the shells. It churned up like a stream under a waterfall. The whole line was nearing the Turks' first line of trenches. One after another, the units reached the fire trench and the Turks who got out found themselves cut off by a rain of shells. In some places they had fired all they thought best, nor did they run. They were just "not having any." They stood in their trenches waiting to be taken prisoners though strenuously opposed to getting out. That might mean one of their own men's bullets in the back. They were soon out, however, and under guard, minus their rifles. Then it was up and over for the second line. Some had not stopped at all at the first line and were halfway to the second. The Turks were covering the "getaway" to the second line by an army of snipers who kept a rain of bul-

lets whizzing over the ground toward the relinquished trench. Flat on the ground Tommy and Sepoy rained bullets back. Then the screen of snipers broke for the distant trench. Up and after the second trench went the British. It was great. Two miles to the second line seemed nothing at all. A few of the troops got all the way. The second line was being taken. Then a halt. Back to a part of the first line. Now there was disorder, Tommies, Ghurkas, Sikhs all in together firing frantically over the top of the trench. The mules were almost all killed. Ammunition had to be brought on men's shoulders. It was getting low, besides.

A big Sikh, with his long black beard and side whiskers twisted up and tucked under his turban, was putting in his last charge. His eyes were blazing with excitement. He would make the last one count. He looked over the top and watched for a target for his last bit of lead. "Duck, you blinkin' idiot," shouted a Tommy next to him—but he might have spoken Yiddish for all the good his cockney English did the Sikh. Bang! went his rifle. Almost the same instant he slid down in a

heap. He had looked too long. He was killed outright, so there was nothing to be done but leave him. The wounded were being taken to a deep trench of the captured first line. The troops were coming back from the Turks to the first line again. Orders came for all wounded who could walk to "get out of it." Things looked bad. Now more of the force was back in the captured first-line trenches. It was a check.

Night came and all the wounded that could find room in the iron Army Transport carts were going back to the river. Next day there was a fierce counter attack by the Turks. They wanted to get back to their first line again. The wounded who were still in the trenches were placed in a deep trench to wait for carts to take them away. All during the next day the firing grew more intense. The Turks came nearer. The shells and bullets were raining all around the trench where the wounded were bundled together. A shell there would inflict awful execution.

Even in the midst of the rain of bullets some of the wounded started on the long painful hike to the river, twelve miles away, rather than stay

in that hole. There was danger now of a flank attack by the Turks, but the good old British cavalry was too much for that. Into the night the firing continued. Finally it died down. The attack was beaten off. There was a sigh of relief, especially from the trench where the wounded were still lying, huddled together in all sorts of cramped positions

It was the first chance to breathe a deep breath in peace since they had been put in there. Some of the finer spirits saw a bright side to the predicament. "I hain't moved f'r a 'ole day. Mebbe I won't know 'ow when I get a chance," said one who was sitting with his knees tucked under his chin and a big bandage around his chest. Another, recognizing a pal not far away, called out, "Eh! Bert, next time you fall asleep in here, don't snore so loud. Ye might draw a shell your way." However the wounds may have hurt, there was never a murmur as the men waited for the carts to come to take them to the river and then to comfort.

Next day brought another attack, but not so ferocious. During the day most of the wounded

got away to the boats on the river. It was a queer-looking march, the wounded struggling over the twelve miles to the river. There were iron carts for the more serious cases and in each cart were one stretcher case and two or three sitting cases. The carts jounced along over the rough ground, hitting the wounded together, throwing some out to have to crawl the rest of the way themselves. Once in a while the carts had to cross nullas or dip a wheel in a shell hole, and the occupants would stiffen and grit their teeth as they were jostled together, their wounds getting blows and being pressed. The Indian Drabbies drove as carefully as they could, but with bullets whizzing around, horses and mules being shot, and the ground as irregular as a newly plowed field, it was hard to make the travel easy in these improvised hospital carts. Bare iron or even iron with a layer of straw offers little spring. In some of the carts, as a last resort, they used for mattresses the bodies of men that had been killed.

At last, for most, the journey was at an end. There at the river were several river boats and barges. They were going down the river all the

time, taking what wounded they could hold. But there were not nearly enough for the crowds of wounded and prisoners to go comfortably. And they were getting away only just in time. Next day the force had to retreat. The Turks, reenforced from Bagdad, were getting around to the right. There was nothing for it but to fall back. The dash for Bagdad was over. All the hopes of a victorious force were shattered. The retreat was started. Bagdad must remain a mud town of a Turkish Pasha.

The hope of trying again was by no means given up, but just then the one necessity was to get away from the Turks. It was a great feat, that retreat. Fighting rearguard actions continually, the force had to move slowly enough to protect the flotilla of river boats which had to go around the long bends of the tortuous river. The river was low and the banks at the bends were veritable traps. Under the circumstances, getting aground on that river was much to be avoided. The armed tug *Sumana* came to a sharp turn to the right. The bow nosed round in mid-stream. The stern shot around like a top, with the swift current behind it,

toward the bank. "Full speed astern!" came the order from the skipper to the engineer below. The pilot swung the wheel far to the port and the stern shot by the bank. "Missed it by a foot—good work, captain," shouted one of the wounded officers who were being carried as emergency passengers on the tug. The stern churned up a boiling, surging eddy of muddy water as it passed the bank and the next minute the incident was forgotten in the anxiety over the next turn in the river.

Down at Kut the medical officers and staffs were straining every nerve in their efforts to get accommodations ready for the large number of wounded that were on their way down. Word came down the river that 3,000 were on the way. In Kut there was accommodation for about a quarter of that number. But perhaps the number was a mistake. They began to come in and there was a continual struggle to land the boats, carry off the wounded, house them and feed them. The prisoners were coming down too, and they had to be taken care of. Then came at once two terrible reports. One was that everything that would not

help in a siege should be sent out of Kut, the other that there was a break in the line of communications to the south and danger of an Arab attack on Kut. That seemed the last straw. Already everyone was working overtime on the business of taking care of the wounded. Now everyone that could possibly carry a gun must get out and be ready for an attack. Many of the active units were helping with the convoys of wounded. Now they must be ready to defend the town. The wounded were again packed on boats and started down the river. They had a disheartening voyage. When they were a dozen miles from Kut the boats stopped. Someone had seen a hostile band of Arabs around the bend. There they were, sure enough, entrenched near the bank, like so many Turks. Having no means of fighting the Arabs, the boats returned to Kut. The next trip the boats were accompanied by an escort, a gun boat and some infantry. On the decks of the convoy were embankments of kit bags, blankets, boxes and anything else that could be found to protect from bullets the wounded lying on the decks.

This time the boats got through. The wounded were safe, but still crowded together and uncomfortable on the decks of the boats and barges. At Amara something happened which made all the difference. The Y. M. C. A. was started now along the Tigris and some of its members at Amara came aboard the boats with hot mutton-head soup, warm comforts, and fags. "By gum! —that's the spirit," was the unanimous approval of the wounded men. The secretaries received more "Thank you's" from those men than they had ever had before.

With the escort gone the danger of Arab attack on Kut was now all the greater. There seemed to be nobody left to defend the place. The retreating force was coming nearer the town in which it would stand. The monitors *Comet* and *Firefly* ran aground and had to be left. The transfer of crews had to be done under fire. Skipper E—— of the *Firefly* stood on the bridge doing everything possible to get the boat off the mud. Bullets whizzed all around him; one copped him in the arm. The boat still stuck and had to be left to the Turks. On down the river the force

continued, the rear guard halting now and then to dig in and beat back an attack by an advanced Turkish force.

The Turks made a last desperate attack on the first day of December. A large part of the force caught up with General Townshend's rear guard. The attack was too strong for a little guard to handle, and nearly all Townshend's army had to right about and beat them back. But this was the last attack. The Turks were "all in" and could go no farther. That day the last of the wounded had to be got out of the town of Kut. Packed so closely they could not move, on any kind of boat that could be found, they went down the river.

Two days later General Townshend and his force reached the fateful town. The cavalry and whatever else could be of more use below went down stream. Preparations were made to hold the town until a relief force could be sent up the river, and then—well, Bagdad was not forgotten. A thing worth starting is worth finishing. It was not the time to ask whether it were worth starting. It had been started. It was now the duty of the force to finish it.

By the seventh of December the Turks were surrounding the town of Kut and the investment began. Next day a message came across the lines that Nur-ed-din called on Townshend to surrender. Some shells served as a refusal. The Turks returned the message with more shells. Enraged at the audacity of Townshend in settling in the town the Turks bombarded furiously for the next few days. On the twelfth, not satisfied with bombarding, they attempted to take the place by storm. They must have lost over a thousand in the attack. Still Townshend held on, and would hold on till relief came. Christmas came and another attack from the Turks. All Christmas morning the troops on the front north of the city were beating the Turks out of a bastion they had stormed the night before. By the time the new year came the Turks were convinced that Townshend was in Kut to stay. Indeed he was. And his men were all behind him whatever might happen.

Before long word came that the relieving force was on its way and that it was meeting with marked success. "The relief force attacked the Turks at Sheikh Saad, fifty miles east of Kut, and

drove them back after a very stubborn fight under bad conditions of weather. Sir Percy Lake is now in command of the relief force. General Nixon has relinquished command on account of ill health." So read some scribbling on a sheet of paper stuck up on the door of one of the billets.

The relief force was not the only force to feel the effects of mud. Kut was a veritable quagmire. Things were beginning to go badly. The rations were getting low. There were a number of sick in with the wounded in the hospital. Worst of all, the hospital seemed to be in a most exposed position for the Turkish shells to hit. Still it rained, still the river rose, still the rations decreased, still the wood of the houses went for firewood, still the guns of the relief force were far, far away—but still there was hope of Bagdad. "Bagdad for Christmas" was a thing of the past. But "Bagdad when relieved" took its place. Time, however, wore even this down to nothing and all that anyone dreamed of was relief, perhaps to be sent down the river.

During January, rations went down to half and there was talk of eating horses and mules. Yet

the spirit of the force stayed high. "I am absolutely calm and confident as to the result. . . . We will succeed—mark my words!—but save your ammunition as if it were gold," said General Townshend in a communiqué to all troops on January 26. February failed to bring relief. March came. On March 10 another communiqué from General Townshend said, "In order then to hold out, I am killing a large number of horses so as to reduce the quantity of grain eaten every day, and I have had to reduce your ration." And to think that once they had been nearly to Bagdad, the center of the food supply of Mesopotamia!

The relieving force was not concerned about Bagdad. In the awful conditions of fighting in mud that was so slippery one could hardly walk, in floods that filled up the trenches and made life, not to speak of fighting, well-nigh impossible, the hope of getting to Kut seemed about as far away as that of getting to Bagdad. Every mishap that could come from nature came to that relief force. Rain would have been bad enough, but mud and then the river in flood were too much for any force to fight through.

Yet slowly plowing through the mud the force got to within a few miles of Kut. In the evening the flashes of Townshend's guns might be easily seen. There was more hope. "We'll get to them," was the feeling. But time was passing rapidly and starvation waits for no man.

The indifference about Bagdad had now changed to fear. Suppose they should all be prisoners of war? That might mean Bagdad, or Mosul, or some lonely mountain stronghold in the Taurus mountains, away up in Asia Minor. That would be no place for a white man. Rations were getting very low. There was almost nothing—no sugar, no milk, no vegetables, no eggs, no butter. The hospital patients fared little better—perhaps a little milk and a few beans. For the rest a few dates, a little jam, some horse meat or mule meat and Arab bread. This was the issue. Take it or leave it. There was nothing else. Indians would crawl into their blankets for the night but never wake up. The nourishment was not enough to keep them going in their sleep. The roofs of all the buildings had gone for firewood and now the wood was scarce. It seemed only a

matter of days. The airplanes were doing their best to drop "eats" but it was impossible to supply the demand.

Spring weather was setting in and the town was more livable. There was hope in the clear air. One night there came a rumor which set the whole garrison in a blaze of excitement. The paddle boat, *Julnar,* was running the blockade with food. All night long the garrison listened for the chug of an engine, or the whisper of a hopeful rumor. Could it succeed? Would it mean perhaps some good bread, or even just a taste of meat and vegetables? There was heavy firing from down stream. Then silence. That was a long, long night. At daybreak the story reached Kut. Down the stream by the Turkish fort at Margasis lay the little craft, aground, and its valiant commander lying on the bridge in a pool of his own blood.

That was the end. Everyone knew it. Three more days of "sticking it" mingled with preparations to get out, and the surrender was an accomplished fact. One hundred and forty-three days the siege had lasted. It was a new record. Now it did mean Bagdad. But to go to Bagdad

as prisoners of the Turks! It was bitter. There was hope that the force might be paroled. The Turkish commander was in favor of it, so valiant had been the stand. But orders from Constantinople, or more likely from Berlin, said no. And no it was.

A certain number of wounded were to be allowed to go to India in exchange for Turkish prisoners. I do not wonder the Turks did not care for the men they sent to India. I have seen the results of famine in India, but never have I seen such specimens of bone with a little skin over it as among those men. The Turkish medical officers were to decide who should go. It was an anxious time for the men under inspection. Bagdad had lost all its charms now. Even the worst sickness would be welcome if it could save one from going to that place as a prisoner. The officers looked over all the cases very carefully, taking temperatures, examining, deciding.

Each man with a light case went through those minutes as though they were years. "Busra" meant India, perhaps "Blighty." "Bagdad" meant—what might it mean to be taken care of

by Turks, with their ancient methods of living and sanitation, to be treated as a prisoner in the town the Turks were gloating over? The fate of one man, with an attack of fever, was being weighed in the balance. It was pitiful. But he would not look "pitiful" in the face of a conqueror. He would keep on the face of a fighter and like a man would "stick" whatever might come rather than let a Turk conqueror see a sign of weakness. Inside he wanted to be taken for sick and "pretty seedy," but still farther inside was that determination to win, no matter what the consequences. He stared the officer right in the eye as he looked him over. He would be slave to no one. The decision came. It was "Bagdad." The sick man never moved a muscle. Inside somewhere he had a queer feeling. There was victory for him beyond ordinary victory. But when the officer passed on, his lip quivered a little and he lay looking sadly ahead, thinking very hard.

A few days later some boats were bearing to their destination the British sick and wounded slated for "Bagdad." The Turks treated them well enough and the food certainly tasted good.

The awful feeling of surrender was soon dimmed. Once in a while a Turkish medical officer stopped to talk to a Britisher, to congratulate him on the way the force stood the siege and to wish him a quick recovery. There was no use now in being disagreeable about it. The trouble was all over and one might as well be friendly with his new neighbors.

Slowly the boats pushed past the scenes of the campaign of a few months before. Then came that old Arch of Ctesiphon and there were thoughts conjured up by that which beat anything its own history could have to tell. There were thoughts of the day of frantic fighting when the trenches in front of it changed hands—but changed hands twice. There were few remarks aloud. But the thoughts that filled the mind of everyone who watched the shore were thoughts of a victory almost won, of a crown almost gained. There was a lump in the throat of many a Tommy as he went slowly by that desert scene. There was not a man that cared whether or not the boat went on to Bagdad now. Bagdad had nothing in it for him.

Slowly the boats approached. The palm groves

in the distance showed where the fertile city region started. Around another bend and the minarets were in sight. Was that the city of the "Arabian Nights," of glory, of grandeur, of riches? Nearer and nearer moved the boats and the buildings became distinguishable. It looked something like Amara—but no—Amara was British. Here was the city of Bagdad, a city, not of *Aladdin,* not of *Haroun-al-Raschid*—a city, not the prize of English victory, just a city of the Turks.

CHAPTER V

WRITING A NEW PLAY—"ON TO BAGDAD"

The curtain fell. A heartbroken world watched it go down and turned away, eyes dimmed with tears. Poor General Townshend! No. Brave General Townshend! and brave the men that stuck by him to the end! It was through no fault of theirs that they had to surrender. Theirs was the cross, and they bore it without a word. It took courage, during those last days, to hold out and say, "We will not surrender," when the relief force was failing and everything in the little besieged town was going badly. Only sheer will power could make General Townshend stick at it —but will power he had, not only over himself but over his men.

There were Turkish regulars and Kurdish troops fighting around Kut, holding Townshend in and keeping the relief force out. Those troops that had to be there to fight for the masters of

Turkey might have been doing a far more deadly work in another part of the world, helping in the attempt to get down through Palestine to the Suez Canal, or fighting their way through Persia. During the days of the battle against the relief force the Turks lost their city of Erzerum. It is impossible to tell how great good may have come from the sacrifice of Townshend.

Then, too, what might follow! Kitchener and the Nile Campaign followed the sacrifice of General Gordon at Khartum. At the death of Gordon, Khartum and nearly all the Nile became the province of the crazy Mahdi, but that black page in English history was wiped clean when Kitchener led his splendid Anglo-Egyptian army into the city of Khartum. Perhaps another Kitchener would come to Kut—and Bagdad.

That was the problem for the "producers" in London. On the stage the curtain was down and the players were through. The first Mesopotamia show was at an end. But the producers at the War Office in London were not through by any means. They must find a new Kitchener to send out as hero of a new show, a drama with an ending

as happy as the first had been sad. The tragedy had served a purpose but a comedy would serve a far greater. If the deserts made a good stage for tragedy they ought to make a good stage for comedy. The drops at the back of the stage had made picturesque scenery, the rows of palms, the graceful Arab boats, the crescent moon hanging jauntily in the brilliant Eastern sky, the white buildings, the odd people in their ancient dress. And there had been no Bagdad. With the domes and palaces and palms of Bagdad added to the scenery, the stage would indeed be wonderful.

With the British the protagonists, and the Turks the antagonists there were tremendous possibilities for action gradually rising till the Turks should be rushed up the river to their sacred city as fast as the British had been rushed to Kut. It must be so! It must be soon! Send out a Kitchener hero and more men and equipment and above all cut out the mistakes—that was the task that lay before the producers, the War Office.

"Cut out the mistakes." It echoed the old order from London that had been like the writing on the wall during the first campaign, "A safe

game must be played in Mesopotamia." Everyone felt it. Everyone showed he had had a part in making the mistakes. "A safe game must be played in Mesopotamia." It was like the ghost of Julius Caesar, like that apparition that comes to a man who has committed murder and takes him back to the scene. It brought post mortems. The ghost would out. In the deserted house of Mesopotamia the ghost began to prowl. "A safe game," it said, and disappeared to see whether anyone was conscience-stricken. Again, "A safe game." It seemed as though everybody felt responsible for the mistakes. Everybody saw the bogey. The strain grew too great. With one accord the cry came, "Who was to blame?"

The Royal Commission that in August, 1916, began the inquiry into that question has now come, reported and gone. All connected with the affair have been found responsible "according to their relative and respective positions." Sir John Nixon was found most responsible because of his "confident optimism." But everyone had a share in the bungle. The hero, General Townshend, who advised against the advance, alone stood

above blame on that score. Townshend had the choice of obeying or getting out. He chose as a real soldier must. Some were found to blame for misstatements; some knew things they did not tell. Some had used poor judgment. Some had been ambitious. Some had had fears and had been too reticent. Some had seen the chance to grasp at a possible straw and had grasped. Some had been just careless. Many had been overworked.

But there was other work to be done beside inquiring into the faults of the past. The important work now was to get along with the new show and forget the old. The ghost was only beginning to prowl with its "cut out the mistakes" when the producers and actors were getting ready for the new show. On the stage Sir Percy Lake was laying a foundation for new operations, beginning with the base and reorganizing the entire situation. The forces in the trenches to which they had advanced in the attempt to relieve Townshend remained where they were, advancing only a little along the south bank of the Tigris where the Turks withdrew to better positions while they sent more troops up into Persia and Asia Minor

against the Russians. Summer came and with it cruel suffering from heat for the dejected troops.

The failure was too depressing, the breakdown too complete to be remedied on the field. The War Office had to do that. It was a Herculean task to reorganize Mesopotamia. But the War Office set about it with determination to make good—and above all to cut out the mistakes. In the new show there would be no hazy distribution of authority. There should be no advance without a well-formed plan of action and a well-defined objective. There should be no unworkable understanding between those who make policies and those who execute them. There should be no lack of supplies, no lack of reports, no overlooking of facts that ought to be taken into account, no hasty action based on overconfidence, no piling of new troubles on men already overworked, no—but things were moving. The producers were doing things and were beginning at the beginning.

In July, hardly three months after Townshend's surrender in Kut, the London War Office formally assumed direction of the Mesopotamia show. The Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force,

under orders from London, took the place of the Indian Expeditionary Force D. Inadequate transport had been the foundation of all the cruelty in the campaign. The transport service was put under the Directorate of Inland Water Transport, directly responsible to London. It had been impossible, under the old system, to find boats suitable for the peculiar conditions of the country. Now they would be made in England. With this step came the similar Directorate of Supply and Transport, of Ordnance, of Medical Services, of Port Administration, of Railways, of Conservancy Works, of Remount and Veterinary Services. Every step in the right direction saved British lives and made victory more certain.

The new campaign was in the realm of international politics. It should be run from London, not from India. Yet the Indian government deserves great credit for its services during the first campaign. At the outbreak of the war India sent to the aid of the mother country for fighting overseas 80,000 British troops and 200,000 Indian troops. She stripped herself almost bare for the sake of the Empire as a whole. Then commenced

trouble in the interior of India where some 7,000 agents in German pay came to stir up strife among the Indians; then more serious trouble on the Afghan frontier where the hostile tribes were influenced to raid the Indian border. Indeed, India had her hands full, but she responded manfully to every demand. Even the Rajahs, the native princes who did not acknowledge the overlordship of Great Britain, gave unsparingly of their riches and of their men. India was really in the war. India sacrificed for it. But she could not do everything—and Mesopotamia suffered. The minds of the Indian government were busy with other things.

Now that the direction of the campaign in Mesopotamia was under the War Office in London, victory was assured. But the hero? The new campaign demanded a hero that could use the advantages resulting from central control, who would see to it that everything went right, who would never make a move until everything was ready and who could be relied on to continue to the end. It should be someone who knew the

War Office end, as well as the service end of war.

The news came to us in India that the Commander-in-Chief of the newly named Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force was Major-General Frederick Stanley Maude who was already in Mesopotamia with the Thirteenth Division. No one knew anything particularly stirring about him. He had had long service in the army but had not been in the limelight. We looked up his record and found that he had first served in the Soudan campaign, in 1885, in the vain attempt to rescue General Gordon, besieged in Khartum. That sounded promising. Here was a similar campaign to the one on the Nile. After the Soudan he had served in South Africa for three years, during which time he became a Major and won the D. S. O. After four years of service in African campaigns, he would know how to conduct such a war as that in Mesopotamia. Then, too, he had served in the War Office for eight years, in various positions. He had served on three general staffs and in the Great War served with distinction in France as Brigadier-General in command of the Fourteenth

Brigade, and in Gallipoli as Major-General in command of the Thirteenth Division. That division had then gone to Egypt and later to Mesopotamia, where it now was. Certainly the record sounded as though Maude were the right man. Every requirement was met. He knew the War Office and he knew war in the deserts. His steady advancement to more and more responsible positions showed that whatever tasks he had to do he did well. That was exactly the combination needed in Mesopotamia. "Cut out the mistakes. Go slow but go sure."

The atmosphere cleared. There was hope in the air. Among the troops in India, on their way to Mesopotamia, a spirit of faith in the future found its way into the general atmosphere. The men in London were in direct command. England would see that the new campaign was a great success—but it would be a serious business. The relief force had tried its best to take Kut and had failed. Townshend had surrendered. These two facts were clear. But Kut would fall! The dogged nature of the British soldier came to the front.

It came time to embark for Mesopotamia. As

the B. I. steamer *Egra* left her mooring in Bombay harbor someone started the men on the song, "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile." We were ready for anything.

In the show in Mesopotamia, "On to Bagdad," I was a stage hand. My part, like that of the doctors and nurses, was the part of a helper. My duty was to be of all possible assistance to the fighting men. We all ran the same chances of succumbing to some of the germs of Mesopotâmia and of being visited by airplane bombs and the like, both fighters and non-fighters, but these chances were small, and as I could not use a gun against the enemy my part was surely not that of an actor. The principal advantage in the position of a stage hand in any play, aside from the advantage of being able to help, is the opportunity to become intimate with the actors and their ways on the stage, as they go through their parts. My work as secretary of the Y. M. C. A. among the British troops in Mesopotamia gave me unlimited opportunity for this.

After following the first campaign against Bag-

dad we know something of the stage on which the new show is to be played. We know something of the new hero who is to lead the cast. Now for the rest of the actors. First let us look at the private soldier with his big sun helmet, his short little blouse with its big buttons, his heavy boots and wound puttees, and the perpetual cigarette in the side of his mouth. Tommies are Tommies wherever you find them, in England, in India or in Mesopotamia. Thousands and thousands are put into a mold, where they are to become just parts of a great machine and to lose much of their own individuality. Most of the Tommies in Mesopotamia during the second show had seen considerable service and were pretty well molded.

Tommy is always three things, doggedly brave, undemonstrative, sentimental. He thinks—very little. He can wait patiently for hours, days, weeks, months—so long as he has his cigarettes. He can work like a Trojan, rush into danger calmly, perform the most wonderful feats of bravery and never say anything about it. When orders come he obeys—unless he thinks what rights he

has are trampled upon, and then he is as doggedly stubborn as he is against the enemy.

He never quite comprehends things, never gets to the bottom of things, never reasons things out. I was among the Tommies during times when there were great victories and during times when there were bitter defeats. He was a calm winner; a good loser. Neither victory nor defeat seemed to quite sink through. I can not imagine a French soldier or an American being so undemonstrative about victory or defeat as Tommy. He knows he has "done his bit." That is all he cares. He is sort of a fatalist. "If the bullet's got my name written on it, it's for me. Otherwise not," is his philosophy. When the Tommies left camp to go up to the front line and over the top they looked at it as though they were going to a test of courage. Courage was the one thing that counted. It is Tommy's religion, so far as he has any, though he does not think it through deep enough to bring God in by name. He does not want to go over the top. But if it must be, he will show that he has as much courage as a man can have. The wounded were the only ones that really

thought. Going up and over Tommy did not think. He felt. Some Tommies went over the top kicking a football.

Tommy does not value life as he knew it before the war. He is in war—not in life. To Tommy there is one high value, to do one's bit; one low value, to slack, or, in Tommy's language, to "swing the lead." There is a trust between man and man in the trenches that men who go into them feel for the first time. "He let me down" is the one great curse. Tommy feels, "We're all in it together." So he hates "swank," or "side," putting on airs. How can anyone claim to be better than another in the trenches? Everybody is giving his life.

The feeling that "we're all in it together" has one drawback. It makes Tommy feel that everything is common property. "Anything you can get is yours, no matter how you get it—so long as everyone has an equal chance," is the way he looks at it.

Tommy is not happy in the trenches. He longs to get back. When he does get away to civilization for a little while, he wants at first nothing

but sleep. Then he wants excitement. He has been in the excitement of war up to his neck and his "blood is up." He looks for more excitement, not for rest, and he finds it in one way or another.

Tommy sees very little of the "horrors of war." People must stay at home and look at war from a distance to see those. In war for all he is worth, Tommy ceases to compare. He sees nothing horrible. It is war as a separate existence that Tommy sees. Wounds are part of it. His life at home is past. It is a dream. He will return to it again, he thinks, but it is something different. It has to do with the ordinary world. War has not. Seeing so many wounded and dead, and always facing death himself, his feelings are numbed. He is not all brute, but he is not as he was at home. Some Arabs were to be hung near our camp and a man applied for the position of hangman. Later he told the story of the execution. "The rope did not kill the 'budoos,' " he said, "so I stepped in and hit them over the head with a stick to finish them." At home he would have been shocked at the occurrence, but at home

he would have thought in terms of peace. In Mesopotamia he thought in terms of war. Once only does Tommy think of the horrors in war—when his chum is killed. He goes to death light-hearted himself, but when a chum "goes west"—that is different.

The Tommy of Mesopotamia always had a little kit bag full of trinkets he had picked up; Arab bullets, or pieces of Turkish uniforms, or buttons —almost anything. Everywhere that he had a bunk he had a little bag or box full of keepsakes. One man in camp had his box stolen by an Arab. It was pathetic to see how downhearted he was at the loss. If it had been a leg he had lost he would not have minded. That would be just part of the game. But that little box represented everything that was his own personal property. Everything else he had, including himself, was the property of the army.

Tommy is always funniest in his "grousing" or grumbling. He grouses not because he has a grievance but from habit. If there is really something to grumble about, if his battalion has been caught in a tight place and nearly wiped out, and

he is severely wounded, he says nothing, or very little. But if his tea is cold he grouses terribly. He grouses about the little things that he would grouse about at home. If he is billeted behind the lines and there is a little rain getting in, he grouses. If he is in the trenches waist-deep in water, he sees something funny in it. His grousing is sort of a relic of past breeding. Breeding does not get a chance to show itself when Tommy goes "up and over." A Tommy came along the trench one day and, holding his side, shouted, "Aw, I stopped a whole bloody shell myself." A comrade shouted back, "Aw, shut your mouth. You'd think you'd stopped a whole bloody Jack Johnson." A Tommy was brought into a field dressing station. He was riddled through and through with machine-gun bullets. "Say, mate," he said, "write to me father that I look like the top side of a pepper box."

There is a beautiful side about Tommy. I saw the bunks of thousands of Tommies in rest camps and in the trenches in Mesopotamia, and almost invariably there was tucked into the blankets or hanging alongside the bunk a little paper picture

frame with pictures of his family, his wife, or his girl, or of a pretty landscape. A Tommy to whom I gave a piece of chocolate said he would rather have a taste of that than anything else in the world. It was just like his pictures. He was almost brute in the relentless struggle of war. Then came something that had to do with the days when he lived out on ordinary earth. It had to do with something tender about him and it pulled him back to himself and gave him a new start. I was playing my violin at a concert just behind the lines one evening when a husky Tommy stepped up to the front and asked most respectfully, "Would you please play 'The Rosary,' sir? The chaps want to hear it."

Many of the characteristics of the private appear among the other ranks in the British Army. They are tempered and altered, however, by the various degrees of responsibility. There is the lance corporal, with his one stripe, "the private in disguise," or the man who was "a private with us only a minute ago," as many a private has characterized him. His rank is rather an appointment than a promotion, given to see whether he

can make good as a leader of men. Next there is the corporal, with another stripe. He has usually won it by showing his ability as lance corporal. The corporal gets a big share of the mean work of the army. He has to make a lot of men do things they do not want to do, and the men do not forget that he is not very far removed from them. Then comes the "backbone of the army," the sergeant. He has a good deal of the responsibility and has to carry it well. He is the all-important link between the officers and the privates. The sergeant-major belongs to the great "middle class." He can help or can hinder anything that passes either way between officers and lower ranks. It is a unique subaltern who can get things done if he is not on good terms with the sergeant-major. Yet the rank has its disadvantages. "Shove it on the sergeant-major," is the slogan of the officers. If no one knows just who should execute an order it goes to the office of the sergeant-major. His desk is the great dumping ground for every sort and description of order. The sergeant-major is the key that unlocks the door to action. He is usually a man

of at least sixteen years' experience in the army and knows the game thoroughly, often better than his commanding officer. The first commissioned officer, the subaltern or second lieutenant, is the man in the most ticklish position, unless he has worked his way up from the ranks. If he is new and has men under him that know the game better than he, he soon realizes that they obey him without having confidence in him. From first lieutenant up, the officers are or may be commandants, and they differ only in the degrees of their responsibilities and experience.

In all the diversities of ranks and classes in the British Army there is one characteristic which stands out as a part of each and every one. That is the indomitable desire to "carry on." No matter what may be the obstacles, no matter what may be the discouragements, "carry on!"

And one quality stands out above all others in the British Army. That is the quality of iron discipline. Combined with bravery it is the foundation of the army's accomplishments all over the world. The iron discipline makes for uniformity. It attempts to eliminate the personal element

where it does not help; but it does not attempt to eliminate it where it can help. The officers take an interest in the men. The men get to love their officers. The officer shows his interest by being calmly insistent that everything go right. The men show their love by having everything go right. It is part of the discipline. There is never a looseness about the distinction between ranks. The lance corporal, though he was "just a private with us a minute ago," is in a different world. A shabby salute from a man to an officer or an officer to a man is an unpardonable sin.

But if the officers are strict with the men they are as strict with themselves. A captain in Mesopotamia was so cruelly strict with his men that he drew upon himself the hatred of nearly all while they were training at the base. There came the orders to go up and over the top. When his company returned to quarters the captain had won for himself, through his gallantry and care for his men under fire, the love and admiration of every man in his command.

The siege of Kut and the manner in which the

troops stood behind General Townshend to the last is proof of the effect of British discipline. It is proof that discipline does not mean lack of love. It is proof that discipline means that men will do for one officer what they will do for another of the same rank, but it also means that the bond that makes the discipline what it is, is love between commander and commanded. In his communiqués to his men while starvation was staring them in the face and while the relief force was failing and failing, Townshend said, "I . . . now love my command with a depth of feeling I have never known in my life before. . . . With the help of all, heart and soul, to me together, we will make this defense to be remembered in history as a glorious one. . . . I may truly say that no General I know of has been more loyally obeyed and served than I have been in command of the Sixth Division." That does not sound like mechanical discipline. The men loved Townshend as he loved his command, yet there was no let-up in the discipline. If there had been, the force could not have lived one hundred and forty-three days in the besieged

town as it did. At the end came surrender. Yes—but more than that. There came proof of the mettle of the British troops and of the effect of British discipline.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW SHOW—ACT I—GETTING READY

The transport *Egra* carried two thousand troops on the six-day trip from India to Mesopotamia, and a good deal of the time we had to spend below decks; but with concerts, tournaments, "singsongs" and the like the trip was pleasant enough; and we were on our way really to do something. That made all the difference. It was along in October, not quite two years after the entrance of the first transport of the British troops into the waters of Mesopotamia, that we arrived at the top of the Persian Gulf, facing the land of legend. We were "there." We were not actually ashore, but we were aground, which was next to it. Every boat sticks on the bar near the mouth of the river which leads the Tigris and Euphrates to the Persian Gulf. The bar might be moved, but every time a boat goes over, or through it, the captain thinks he has plowed a sufficient channel for any boat.

It was hot and sticky, like a summer day in New York. The deck of the steamer seemed like a prison. The sun was terrifically hot. Our eyes were unused to it and it hurt. The boat was wriggling off the bar, slowly. It was "full speed ahead," then "full speed astern," but still we stuck. It was not till the afternoon tide that by wriggling sideways and other ways we finally got off. We were free and entering a land of promise. What it might promise we did not know, but anything seemed possible in such a country as Mesopotamia, with a British force bound for Bagdad.

Near the mouth of the river a fleet of native boats, "mahailas," was starting on a trading expedition. Shades of Sindbad indeed! Those great bulging sails might take their ancient hulls and the Arabian pilots to any magic shore.

What a country to have war in! But there it was. We were passing the remains of the little mud fort at Fao, destroyed by the first British guns fired in Mesopotamia. It brought Townshend to our minds, and we became serious. Kut must be taken!

We entered the muddy river, steaming between banks of swamp and thick, bushy palms massed along the river on both banks as far as we could see. No one spoke. It was not a time for talking. Thoughts of war and of oriental peace were too confused. We studied the faces of the skippers of the native boats we passed. Little they knew or cared whether British or Turks were winning farther up the river. They had their business as usual and had never paid any taxes to the Turks. The little property that one of those Arab families had was always with them. Their boat was their all. On the bottom of the clumsy old barge was all that a family might need to get along with, a grinding mill for the women to work at, and a brick fireplace to cook the grain into cakes—cakes that would kill a white man who tried to digest them. A place to rest, a place to eat, a family; what more could a home have? Here were homes just as they had been for a thousand years.

Night came, with its gorgeous evening sky. We slept on the steamer amid peaceful oriental scenes and people, on a river where Father Time is never

heeded and where present and future blend into one.

With the morning all the thoughts of peace, of quiet, of ease, conjured up with the night, fled before the light of a different scene. We were at Busra—but not Busra of Sindbad with its thousands of canals, thousands of boats and caravans, millions of date trees, its great mosques and palaces and colleges, sharing the glory of the great Bagdad of the "Caliphate"; nor Busra of the Turks, but Busra, the great British war base. The river was full of transports of the army and gunboats of the navy. The land, for miles, was a mass of camps, barracks, supply dumps and workshops. It was war and nothing else. None of these things would have been here otherwise. It was a tremendous business, this war, and Busra was the warehouse and workshop. Here time was precious. There was no more of the attitude of the East. Immense bands of Indian and Egyptian laborers were working at top speed on roads, railways and wharves. Other bands were unloading stores from ocean boats, sweating up and down the gangplanks with their burdens and pil-

ing them in great huge pyramids in the palms. Here and there a motor lorry or a Ford ambulance was sending up a cloud of dust as it tore over the desert, while, awaiting orders to get on with other work, hundreds more stood ready at the transport stations. Not a moment must be lost. Kut must be taken! The word was on everyone's lips. "What's the word from up at Kut?" "There's a rumor of beginning next month"; "Bagdad for Christmas this year!" were some of the expressions of every day. The campaign to retake Kut was on in earnest.

We were getting to the show in the middle of the first act. That act saw no fighting. It was perhaps still more interesting, if different from the rest. General Maude was tackling and seeing through the Herculean task of "getting ready." He was "cutting out the mistakes," the all-important dictum. Plainly, his task was this: to make out of the mud town of Busra, amid scenes of the life of the wandering Arabs, a great warehouse, a warehouse for every kind of implement of war, but especially of men—a place to receive, store,

repair and ship men along with other implements of war.

Here were the actors, thousands of them, on a stage so different from the like warehouses of England and France as to be overwhelming in its contrasts. The unimaginative soldiers of the British army were getting ready for the work to come by first getting used to the Arab people in whose land they were living, getting acclimated not only to the climate but to the ways of the Arab land.

Busra had changed greatly since the day when the first British troops marched into it, two years before. The many flat-roofed Turkish buildings were now converted into billets or offices of the British army. Where had stood soft couches for the idle Pasha now stood tables with typewriters going at newspaper-office speed. Where had been Turkish gardens now were piles of cut stone for roads, brought from overseas. There were also signs of German foresight in the days of peace. Materials for the Berlin-Bagdad Railway were piled as they had been left by the Teuton railway engineers, or were being used by the British.

Rails marked "Made in Berlin," with the shipping mark "Busra," were used, some as girders for a little bridge across a ditch, and others for the British light army railway.

Throughout the town of Busra the star and crescent door-knockers and the Arabian coffee-shop signs had given place to signs of British offices of the army, G. H. Q., D. S. & T., D. O. S., D. M. S., E. S. O., D. L. of C., and many others of greater and of less importance. Electric wires followed the roads through the town. Even in the bazaars the needs of the British soldiers took precedence over those of the native population. The Turkish barracks were crowded with British troops, the small river and canal boats which served as taxis were taken almost entirely by English patrons. Most of the townspeople had left their ordinary merchant business and were working for the men in khaki.

Beyond the town were the camps and dumps, hospital huts and wharves, animal inclosures and transport machines, new-made roads and land developments. As the sun went down everything became again silent and motionless. The outlines

of the cities of tents grew dimmer and dimmer against the lurid sky.

The sentries were posted. We were stopped abruptly by one with "Halt! who goes there?" "Friend," came the answer. "Pass, friend; all is well," was the quick response. Some Scotchmen were passing the sentry with us. One of them, with characteristic pride in his Highland kilts, said to his mate, "Does he no ken hoo Fritz 'ud look in kilts?"

With the night returned the East, and as we lay in our tents the jackals' barks and the camels' grunts alone broke the stillness.

The constant getting ready, getting ready, made brothers of us all. We were all working for the same end, all the thousands of us in Busra, all ranks and all kinds. That made even camp life seem bright. As the days passed we found that living in the land of the Arabs was not so bad after all. Mesopotamia was an ideal place for a big camp. There was plenty of space to spread out, in fact there was not very much but space. The aviators were in their element. The whole country, except for the palm groves, was an aëro-

drome. And we were so far away from civilization that we were not bothered by comparisons between our past and our present states. We were in a different world.

Yet looking at it from a distance everything seems almost ludicrous. It is one thing to clear a part of a plain somewhere in America and build a camp for the new troops to be sent to France. It was another to set down a great base in the midst of date palms. Here we have lines and lines of railways and motor trucks to carry stores to the big camps. In Busra the lines were as likely to be camels as motor trucks. For the meat ration in Busra we had no meat sent from a slaughter house all ready to be cut up, but the flocks which an Arab shepherd, in his long robes, with his crook drove in to be killed in camp. For putting up new buildings there were no huge loads of lumber, but long lines of little donkeys carrying sacks of dirt to the spot. The dirt became mud, the mud became the outside of mud huts, plastered on reeds bound together for walls and roofs.

And the people were so queer. To irrigate their fields two husky Arabs took a saucer-shaped

basket of reeds and swung it with ropes between them as they stood knee-deep in the river. Each time the swing was toward the shore they picked up a little water and sprinkled it over the bank in the direction of a ditch. Irrigation began only after hours of this process. It never occurred to them to carry water in big vessels to the crops. That would take strength. Their method only took time. And what is time? The boatmen traveled upstream in their homely boats, perfectly happy to sail instead of to pole, if there was only enough wind to enable them to hold their own against the current. The women often crossed the river on bundles of reeds, drifting a mile downstream before they finally got across. They were convinced that time made little difference. The methods of two thousand years ago did well enough. The Arab farmers still plowed their fields with the simple implement of a crooked stick, cut their grain with crude sickles and trod it out with their horses or donkeys. Then there were the date pickers who filled baskets with dusty dates and stamped on them with their bare feet to pack them down. They piled the baskets

together ready to be shipped to the West. In Busra we were forbidden to eat dates without washing them in the chemical purifying solution issued by the army, and we had eaten the same kind of dates at home without a thought!

The slow way of doing things kept in style principally because there was no great competition. But the Arabs could do heavy work. I never saw such strength in men as those men had when it came to carrying heavy burdens on their backs. When there were no donkeys handy to carry their things, they loaded up their own backs and each man did the work of about three donkeys.

The most curious episode ever, in this line, occurred when we had to move a piano from one part of a camp to another. It was an upright affair, not quite full size. Instead of calling up an express company, there being none, I sent one of the Indian servants out to get some Arabs. I heard him a minute after, not far from the tent, calling "Hamal! Hamal! Abu Hamal!" In another minute there were four immense Arab coolies standing at the opening of the tent. I selected the biggest of them and planted him

with his back to the back of the piano, as though he were a wooden soldier or a big doll. Then with all the Arabic I had been able to master and many words in *Robinson Crusoe's* sign language I explained that the big fellow should take the piano on his back and the others should steady it. He wanted to know where he was to go, but it would not do to let him know that. He might set a price. So with a little more sign language, accompanied by great flourishes of a big stick, the proceeding commenced. The *hamal* threw his long rope around the piano, and knotted it around his forehead, made a pad on his back with his long robe, and braced himself for the pull. He heaved it up with the help of the other *hamals* and staggered under the load. The muscles of his legs stuck out like great knobs of wood. The rope pressed deep into his forehead and his eyes fairly stuck out of his head. But he looked satisfied and started off, the three other Arabs balancing the weight and helping.

He got about half way when he looked around for a place to set the piano down. No amount of persuasion or compulsion could make him go

farther. He saw a carpenter's bench stuck in the ground not far off and made for that, backed up to it and rested most of the weight on that. "La!" he said, out of his throat, and gave his head a little tip backward, looking very stubborn. Encouragement had failed. I tried humor. "Oh, Abu!" I said, reproachfully. At the word *Abu,* "father," he looked up. I knew so little Arabic I thought it wise to learn some for his amusement. I held up one finger. "English—one; Hindoo—*ek;* Arabi —?" It hit the spot. He forgot to be stubborn and smiled. "*Wahud!*" he said, again out of his throat. I repeated it, but did not get it quite right. "La!" he said. I tried again. He smiled but let it pass. I held up two fingers, then three, learning the next two numbers "*Thnien*" and "*Khalatha.*" That was enough for a little encouragement for the old man. I pointed to the *hamals* who were helping, and with signs theoretically placed one upon the other. When we had the imaginary three-man-high *hamal* I told the *Abu,* "*Khalatha hamal—wahud Abu.*" It hit the old man's funny bone. He laughed outright. Making use of the effect of

the laugh we started off again and the new lease on life lasted till we reached the other end of the camp, where the Arabs were well paid. They went off chuckling, probably at my attempt to speak Arabic.

The mud town of Busra was full of Arabs, but they were of the type that have become weary of the wandering, exciting life over the plains, and have settled down to the life of the town, where stealing is more gentlemanly but just as rife. For the Arabs of story, the Arabs who do things, who rob, plunder, wander and fight, are the Arabs of the villages, far from the towns, villages which the dwellers can pick up at a moment's notice and pitch in another part of the desert. It is easy enough to see why the Arabs can move so readily. Their household goods consist of a grinding mill and a few pitchers and bowls. Their houses, unless they have built for themselves a mud village, are just great strips of canvas and skins stretched over poles, or bundles of reeds tied together. Their wardrobe would hardly fill an envelope. Never soiling their feet with shoes; not wearing any sort of hat but a

large handkerchief kept on the head by a coil of wool like a snake, their clothing is most simple. The men have just two garments, a long robe girdled at the waist, and a coarse, dark mantle over that, hanging from the shoulders.

One evening, while walking from one camp to another along the river bank, I lost my way and wandered into a village of these people. The men, all big-boned, dark-skinned fellows, were sitting smoking or were roaming around with that far-off look peculiar to wanderers in the desert. While I was there an old man—he looked like Methuselah—came to the village carrying a sheep. He had slung the animal over his shoulders, holding its fore feet in one hand and its hind feet in the other, with the woolly body around his neck. The old man's long gray beard and the sheep seemed to blend together. The women, much smaller than the men, with worn, wrinkled faces, were nearly all dressed in long black robes. Most of the women were tattooed or had little green figures painted on their cheeks near their eyes. They were grinding at the mills or nursing dirty little babies. The kiddies were playing and laughing

along the bank of the river, where lay the clumsy boats of the Arab family. At the shore there were also women and girls drawing water in long-necked copper vessels and carrying it to the tents and huts. I thought of Rebecca at the well. Some, girls of perhaps twenty-two years, who had kept even to that age traces of beauty, were more brilliantly dressed than the women in black. Perhaps they were favorites of the head man of the family. Over the ordinary loose-hanging shapeless robe they were bedecked with thin scarfs lightly draped around the shoulders or waist. One girl, with a flowing robe, wore scarfs of orange which set off beautifully her rich black Arabian eyes. As she walked up from the bank with her pitcher on her shoulder, the heavy bracelets she wore on her bare legs and arms glistened in the glow of the evening sun.

A small dome of mud in the center of the village was the only sign of the religious observances of the Mohammedan tribespeople. An old man kneeling on the bank was prostrating himself in prayer to Allah, with his face to the western sky and the holy Mecca. Still dressed as the

prophet Mohammed dressed, the man of Arabia was praying toward the Arabian Mecca. Turkish government had not changed the direction to Constantinople.

The holy place of most of the Arabs of Mesopotamia is the little town of Kerbela on the river Euphrates, rather than Mecca of Arabia. It is the spot where the Shiah martyrs were killed, and where the Shiahs still look for inspiration.

One morning in early November I chanced to be in the town part of Busra when I noticed that there was something unusual in the air. There were none of the throngs of coolies around, many of the bazaars were closed, and in side streets were groups of women huddled together on the ground in their black robes, with dust and ashes on their heads, weeping as though their hearts would break. I walked to the canal to get a boat and found there were no boatmen working. Near the bridge I saw a woman carrying a child in one arm and with her free arm waving a sword over the head of the child. Every once in a while she took a little jab at the child's head till it was covered with cuts. That certainly pointed to

something important in the minds of the Arabs.

The celebration to which all these signs pointed was not long in coming. I was on the bridge which crosses the creek when I heard the faint sound of distant shouting, like the echoes of a tremendous crowd. Then there came dim, metallic noises, like armor clashing against armor, then a drum, and a horn. A crowd of townspeople, Arabs, Chaldeans, Jews, Sabeans and Persians, were forming a line along the wall at the side of the road. Before we knew it a number of us in khaki were part of the throng, waiting for the parade.

We were facing the creek running along beside the road. The noise grew louder and louder. In another moment black banners hanging from long lances were moving along over the heads of the crowd across the creek. Now they had reached the bridge. They were crossing, now, and moving up past us. The crazy din of cymbals, drums and horns was almost deafening. First came the black banners, then curiously decorated floats. On one of the floats was a bier, on another what looked like a man's head in a tin pan. Splen-

didly dressed horsemen on fine Arab horses with all their trappings followed these. Some held long curved swords and one would judge from the wildness of their eyes that they expected to do something murderous with them. Then came more banners and persons in rich costumes. Then the rabble on foot; all men, bared to the waist and shouting wildly. They stopped now and then and beat their chests with all their might, keeping time with a leader and shouting "A-li! A-li! Hu-sein! Hu-sein!" as they struck their chests. A big man who stopped in front of us had beaten his chest to shreds. A Tommy, nearby, said, "The trenches are safer."

When the men beat themselves, the groups of women wept all the louder to try to be heard above the tumult of shouting. They set themselves so seriously to the weeping that it became almost a shout, as though they were cheering.

It seemed like a dream after a lesson in the Old Testament about sackcloth and ashes—but no; here were more; a long line of men holding hands. They were dressed in white robes covered with streaks that looked like red paint. But as

they came nearer, the truth appeared. Each man had a square shaved in the middle of the top of his head and a deep cross cut in it. The cut might be fatal—but it would show his pity and love for the blood of those that had died as martyrs. They passed by us slowly, some staggering in their weakness and holding themselves up by the help of their fellows. "That chap looks like he'd copped a bit of a shell. They must do some straffin'. I'd rather the straffin' of the Turks," said someone in the crowd.

The parade passed by and I went my way up through the bazaar quarter of the town. For the first time I could detect some expression in the iron faces of the Arab shopkeepers. The talking in the coffee shops, where the men were sitting on the wide wooden benches smoking their hubble-bubble pipes, was louder and more excited than usual.

I inquired of a friend with experience in Arabs what this celebration was all about, and learned that these paraders were men of the Shiah sect of Mohammedanism, bemoaning the martyrdom of the men whose names they called out—Ali and

his son Husein. This was the Passion celebration.

Ali was cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammed. When Mohammed died, Ali, unfortunately, was not chosen successor to him as head of Islam. In gentlemanly spirit he conceded the election of the chosen one. But his followers were many and fanatical. After the third successor to Mohammed had proved himself unworthy of the post, Ali was made caliph under the pressure of his followers. Ali's claim had been thrice denied, even though he was connected by blood relationship to Mohammed. Now his wild, terrible party got him into power. He tried to rule from the banks of the Euphrates but his attempt was a failure. In the frenzy which followed, Ali was murdered in Kerbela and the sect opposed to him came into power.

But by the murder of Ali his followers were roused to still greater heights of fanaticism. The blood of the prophet had been shed. They put forward Husein, the second son of Ali, as the rightful caliph. They were ready, almost anxious, to die to retrieve the awful murder of Ali. A gruesome struggle ensued and Husein also was killed. Those

deaths have never been forgotten. Half of Islam still regard Ali and Husein as their great forefathers and celebrate the shedding of the Prophet's blood through Ali and Husein by shedding their own.

It is as real to them now as ever. It is said that each year 100,000 Arabs take their dead to be buried in the holy ground where Ali and Husein fell.

These are the people; this the sort of life that we were in the midst of in the great warehouse of men among the palms of the great "date town." But though the people stay the same from generation to generation, the war was going on. Under the strong hand of General Maude everything was ready. General Maude had "cut out the mistakes." Kut would be taken. Every day we expected to hear reports that an advance was being made.

My work took me up the Tigris, nearer the front, to the biggest hospital camp of the force, in the town of Amara. Men were coming and going every day between our station and the front. A few came back with slight wounds from

an airplane raid. Then all was quiet. Every day brought the rumor that there would be an attack the next day.

We could see the results of the work of General Maude. We could see the tremendous reenforcements getting into positions to be used. We could see the piles of supplies, the railways, the transport facilities, a hundred boats where there had been a dozen, a hundred automobiles where there had been one. We could see all manner of machines and factories, ready to repair equipment and guns, to make ice and furnish electric current. We could see splendidly equipped hospitals where there had been a system that absolutely broke down under the strain of the first campaign. But most important of all, we could see a good spirit in the place of the dejected attitude that followed the failure to relieve Townshend. Each and every improvement was to have its share, large or small, in the great drive that must be successful because everything was ready.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW PLUNGE FOR KUT—ACT II

General Maude was at the front now. The first act in Busra was over. The course to be run by his troops was the same which the troops under General Townshend ran in the stirring fight for Kut which brought Townshend his prize. Townshend gained Kut after two days of fighting at breakneck speed. But now there were new obstacles in the course.

Townshend had found a small force of Turks on both banks of the Tigris south of Kut. He had drawn nearly all the force to the south bank and then delivered his crashing blow on the north.

Maude found a larger force of Turks in much stronger positions, with a knowledge that they had kept back the British for many months and that Townshend's surrender in Kut was due to their holding back the relief force. They were confident, reënforced and in fighting mood. And,

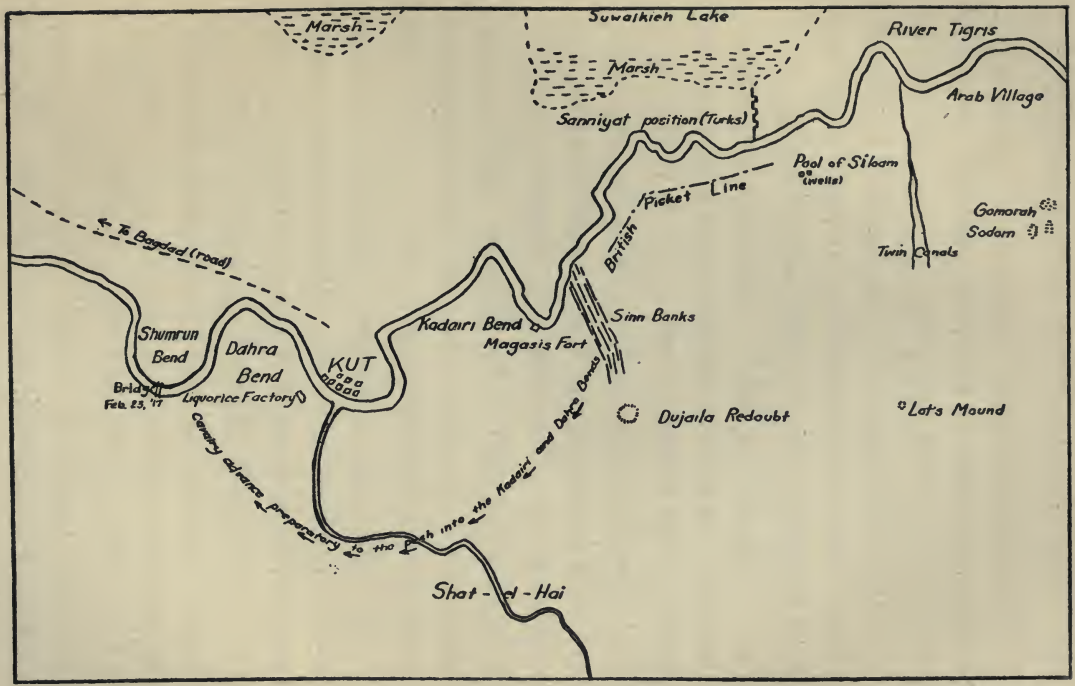
besides, the powers in Germany were taking a more personal interest in the Mesopotamia campaign. The war was indeed in the hands of Turkey as far as the suffering went, but standing above the Turks were German officers in Bagdad. General Maude could not carry off his prize with a dashing attack. For him there must be a campaign.

The blow of General Maude must be a premeditated, painstaking sort of fight, like the campaign of Kitchener in Egypt. Lord Kitchener demanded above all other things that as his troops marched up the Nile they should never march beyond railhead. His troops must wait for the railway no matter how long it might take. With him there would be no force cut off, no force without provisions, no force without all necessary transport. Moving toward Khartum slowly, steadily, surely, Kitchener had in his mind the picture of the heroic Gordon in his last days in Khartum where by his own magnetism of character he held the people of the city firm to him to the end, and finally gave himself for the sake of the honor of his country. When everything was ready, Kitch-

ener's force moved like clockwork, but not before.

General Maude's campaign should move in the same way. He, too, saw the picture of a hero beating back the Turks from Kut and fighting starvation within the town. Like clockwork—the wheels turning steadily, the pendulum swinging without a hitch, always moving ahead, moving ahead, striking, and striking surely at the right time—so would move the British toward Kut.

In the interior of Persia there was still unrest. In the interior of Arabia the Turks were active and hoped to get around behind the British on the Tigris and Euphrates. On the Tigris the Turks were in the same positions that they held when General Maude took command of the British force. The object of the Turks was to hold back the campaign of General Maude with as few troops as possible and leave the bulk of the Turkish army to operate in Palestine and in Persia. That would allow the repulse of the Russians from the Persian hills and the check of the British on the advance toward Jerusalem. If Maude should be successful on the Tigris both these other



The country and the river bends over which the British fought their way to and around Kut.

campaigns against the Turks might be successful. That would not be, however. Maude could not break through Sanniyat. So reasoned the Turks.

It was on Sanniyat that the Turks pinned their hope. And they had reason. Wedged in between the Tigris and an impassable marsh, only a thousand yards apart, the Sanniyat position was as strong as any position might be. It was safe from anything like a flank attack. Also it was too narrow a position to allow feinting in one sector and attacking in another at a great distance away, as is often done. The Turks had spared no labor in building the trenches. Everything was there, concealed machine-gun pits, elaborate parapets, barbed-wire entanglements, military pits, land mines. The communication trenches formed a veritable city of streets. Each street running perpendicular to the river had its opening on the bank and its own system for pumping water. And the No Man's Land before the position was as flat and as open as a frozen lake.

The rumors were the same every day. "We'll be up and over to-morrow." So intent were we on what we expected that the start was made be-

fore we knew what was happening. "We're bombarding at Sanniyat!" came the excited word. It was the "Go!" The campaign was on. It was startling! Everybody had thought that the Sanniyat position could not be taken by a frontal attack unless we could in some way get around behind it too. But we had hardly begun to wonder about it when fresh news came in. "The cavalry have got across the Hai." Another shock! With all our thinking we had not expected that right away. But neither had the Turks.

With everyone "set," at the word "Go" the cavalry, with supporting infantry, moved out in the small hours of the fourteenth of December. It was a year, almost to the day, after the time when Townshend, besieged in Kut, started his great defense against the Turks. The bombardment at Sanniyat was but a dummy to take the attention and strain off the southern bank. The Hai river was off to the west, a little stream, once the main course of the Tigris, flowing due south from the town of Kut. Four miles down its course the British threw a bridge across the stream. There was little current and the river

was not more than a hundred yards wide. The crossing was a complete surprise to the Turks and across the river only a band of Arab horsemen stood in the path of the British force. This band of Arabs was too surprised to offer strong resistance and after a few of them had been mowed down with machine-gun bullets the rest cleared out.

So the little muddy stream was the British prize for winning the sprint. But this was not the whole race. The race for Kut was to be a Marathon. The first part of it was a decided victory for the Tommies. The soldiers of the Sultan were far behind, completely outclassed.

At the south end of the Hai lay Nasarie, on the Euphrates, with the British force in much the same position that it held when the town was first taken early in the first campaign, soon after the celebrated "Townshend's Regatta" at Amara. That position was now all protected. With the British controlling the northern part of the Hai the Turks could send no troops or supplies down that river against Nasarie. It was a great blow, but the Turks were not dismayed. The infidels

A bend in the long covered bazaar which runs through Bagdad

Turkish river mines which failed to halt the British advance

could be no match for the followers of Allah. Allah beat them when they tried to take Bagdad. Again Allah would coop them in a trap.

Little they imagined what this first drive meant. It meant the forging of a great loose chain hanging from its ends, one on the Tigris at Magasis, the other now on the Hai; a chain which would tighten, tighten, tighten, till everything within its bend must perish or flee.

The end of the chain on the Tigris was held firm. General Cobbe was in command from Magasis to Sanniyat. A picket line ran along the south of the Tigris from Magasis to the British position facing the Turks at Sanniyat. The new anchorage on the Hai was as firm. General Marshall, who commanded the charge for the Hai, was in command of that section of the British front.

The Turks now took up a position against the British on the Hai not much more than a thousand yards south of Kut. The British facing north moved toward the Turks. Hliel Pasha began, I imagine, to feel sorry he had lost the Hai. The British advanced in a formation that made the force extend for thousands of yards. Though

the force was little more than a division, it appeared to be a tremendous army. The advance was slow, creeping up to get into touch with the Turks. But it was great to have an entirely new part of the country to march on and work over and dig in. The country below had become monotonous.

The cavalry were in their element. They had been so tied down in the past months, with nothing very exciting to do, they just could not do enough now. Off shot a cavalry detachment past Kut and got near enough to the Tigris to threaten the Turkish river-boats bearing supplies from Bagdad to the army at Kut. They actually saw the boats steaming up the Tigris, taking the first Turkish wounded to Bagdad, and they resolved to follow them there before many days.

It was not yet the time for a great advance on the river Hai. There the force must hold the end of the chain until the middle could move up to the Tigris. When that was done, and the Turks had either crossed the river or surrendered, the force on the Hai might advance toward Kut. In the meantime all that the force need do was keep the

Turks occupied. It stretched out the left of the line to the northwest and obtained a position looking into Kut from the side. The airplanes were busy, bombing and beating back parties of irregulars that attempted to raid the British camps. They hit the Turkish pontoon bridge and caused their engineers a great deal of bother as they towed it upstream. There was a good deal of artillery work on both sides and the British casualties were considerable. All the wounded were sent overland to the Tigris behind the British lines and from there on paddle boats down the river to the hospital.

On a cold, crisp day in December, one of the coldest days of the year, though still above freezing, a paddle boat brought a large batch of wounded to our dock. With their uniforms spattered with blood and rough field dressings on their wounds, they were brought into the hospital wards. These were only huts made of reeds and mud but they seemed like home to the men as they came off the boat. I went aboard the boat with what cigarettes and good cheer I could find, and as I went from man to man I noticed that a

great many were youngsters. They had probably gone over the top for the first time. One of them was sitting on his stretcher looking as though it were easier to sit up than lie down. But he was quite happy. "Good morning, chum," I said, "where'd ye cop it?" With a broad grin he turned and said, "Aw, I copped it fair, not 'alf, a blinkin' bit o' shell in me thigh." But he smiled when he said it. A few hours later I found him sitting on his bed, wiggling his five toes to show he could use the leg he still had. Another boatload came next day. They were a game lot. Yes, they had done their bit but were willing to take more if there was more coming to them. Some of the operations were worse than wounds but they went to them all like men. We had a celebration in one of the wards. A piece of shell was taken from the leg of one man. With the iron scrap were a button and a piece of a watch that had come from the clothes of the comrade on his right. "Good Christmas present, that," he said, as he thought of the approaching day of days.

Christmas in Mesopotamia was a memorable occasion. We were separated from the country of

the first Christmas only by the broad expanse of the Arabian desert. Straight to the west lay Bethlehem. At night we had the same clear Eastern sky with its stars that seemed to look right out at us as though they were beckoning us to follow. There were around us camels with their riders dressed in their picturesque Eastern costumes, and carrying burdens but not of frankincense and myrrh. They were burdens of munitions and supplies for war. During the bright, clear, crisp nights of the Christmas season the riders on the camels, moving slowly off over the plains, seemed truly to be the Wise Men following a bright star in search of the King.

We did our best to make the hospital wards look like Christmas. We had plenty of bandages for decorating. Some kind people had sent out as war gifts various kinds of bright cloth and paper. There were also pieces of torn uniforms and torn invalid clothes. The nurses got all the wounded who could use their hands to help with the decorations, and they did well. On long strips of bandages they pinned pretty figures cut out of pieces of colored cloth or of paper, and over every

doorway was a greeting, "Merry Christmas." We were far from home but we still remembered the great day and its spirit. At midnight of Christmas Eve a carol party walked around among the wards carrying a little pump organ and singing the glad tidings of Christmas and good will. And indeed there was good will. All were working together with a feeling of fellowship that only common suffering and common hope can bring. So Christmas was real even in the plains of Mesopotamia; perhaps more real than anywhere else with the scenes at the birth of the Prince of Peace as a background.

For the Turks there was a Christmas present in the shape of two rainstorms Christmas week. These held up the British a great deal. Mere ditches in soft soil to begin with, the trenches had little chance when the rain came. They were soon small streams with bottoms of mud up to the ankles. Bairnsfather's Bert, who "slept well enough but had to get out and rest once in a while," was the typical character while the rain lasted and the Tommies had to hunt around for a place to get a few hours of sleep in a dry spot.

But the rain did not swell the river enough to flood the land and the New Year came with beautiful clear weather and dry ground and a good spirit among the Tommies in the trenches.

As boys on a baseball field want to start a game going before there is a ball, so this force along the Hai wanted to play its game before any of the accompanying, supporting movements had been carried out. Some men, over-anxious to get along with it, went over the top "on their own," just to see whether they could not find something extraordinary. A shower of bullets soon gave them to understand that there should be no holiday afternoon promenade in the direction of Kut.

The curve in the British line was straightening. The Turks were making a desperate stand in the Kadairi bend as it did so. The bend was fairly seamed with trenches, a maze of ditches and nullas in all directions and of all sizes. The Turks hoped for rain. With that they could flood most of the land and not only keep back the British but cut off a good many. There was no time for the British to dally. If they were going to get to Kut they must drive the Turks out of that

bend—and quickly. While the new year was yet young they went up and over, bound for the Tigris over the rough ground in the bend. They fought like mad, but it was a bloody battle and casualties were appalling. The men of the Manchester Regiment and the men of the Highland Light Infantry took the greatest amount of punishment. They were put into the hardest fighting, and over the rough but open ground these two regiments lost more than half their number. In its slaughter the battle was gruesome, but in its results it was splendid. Steadily the British and Indian troops pushed back the Turks, nearer and nearer the river.

Men from the Scottish border and men from the border of far away Tibet, men from the plains of England and men from the Indian Punjab, fought together in the valley of death. The Indians were splendid. They lived up to every expectation and more. A great many of the Indian wounded came down along with the British. One curious boat-load had the decks of the steamer itself packed with British troops, a barge at one side packed with wounded Indians, and the

barge on the other side packed with Turkish prisoners. We took in the British wounded, sent along the Indians to the Indian hospital next door, and sent the Turkish prisoners to their destination.

The Indians took their suffering extraordinarily well. In the excitement of the fighting they brought to the front all the latent fanaticism of their races as they dashed over the top, but when away from the trenches, wounded, they had their test. They were more like children with bruised knees than anything else. When the wounds smarted they cried like little children, but when they just hurt or felt pretty comfortable they loved to lie and mutter or sing little songs. Whenever I passed a tent filled with wounded Indians, I always heard a sort of tom-tom drum, a *tablaz-dholak,* going steadily, and a little crooning tune like a quiver of the voice. It was queer, but it was their way of having a good time in the midst of getting over their wounds.

An Indian boy who had been in before on errands rushed into my tent one afternoon with a great story. The Indian troops had just done

something very praiseworthy at the front and the word had got around among the Indians that they had been complimented by high officials for their bravery. The boy had heard of the affair and seeking out a soldier not too far removed by caste to speak to him had asked about the fight. Whether I spoke Hindustani or not never entered his head as he blurted out excitedly, "Sepoy jus' now *nulla!* Turk much! *Bohut kharab!* Bullets much! Much finished! Sepoy finish? *Ne Sahib!* Sepoy *teek!* Turk finish! Ah!" I nodded approval and the lad beamed all over as if the honor for the victory were entirely his. What had happened was this: some Indian troops were cut off from the rest of the force by a chance formation of the ground and had to defend themselves in a little *nulla,* or dried-up water channel. The sallies of the Turks on the caged Indians were terrific, but the Indians held their ground, firing till their rifles were hot. Ammunition was practically gone and the Turks were all but on them when help arrived. They had held their ground splendidly, and for good luck, when reënforced, drove the Turks back an extra line of trenches.

Of course the Indians were glad of the work they had done. Even men of different caste rejoiced with them. The hard and fast lines of race and caste were broken by the spirit of comradeship. Not long ago the races of India were steeped in constant civil war. Now fighting with the British were all sorts of Indians, from many parts of India: Sikhs, Jats, Gurkhas, Mahrattas, Punjabis, Patans, Bopals, Rajputs, Garhwals, Baluchis, Dogres, Burmese, and fighting a common enemy they were winning out. They looked to the Tommies as examples.

Steadily on went the hard fighting in the Kadairi bend. One day it was in a recently dug Turkish trench. A long red line, dirt thrown sky-high, airplanes, artillery, infantry, working together on the plunge—and it was gone. Another day most of the fighting was in the old *nullas* or over flat land. That was over sooner. There were not all the helps of modern trench systems to prolong the fighting.

When the Tommies came down to "dock," as they called the hospital, they liked best to talk of the hand-to-hand fighting in the open. It was

there that the real test of the fighter came. When he and the enemy were out of the trenches far enough to grapple in the open he knew whether he had the "stuff" or not. It was here that the test was most severe, because the Turks were so fanatical and their craze took them to such heights of frenzy. And here the bravery of Tommy and Sepoy was rewarded to the full.

Just two weeks they had struggled to push the Turks back to the river. Just two weeks the Turks struggled manfully against their foes. In their trenches the Turks were the most dogged fighters imaginable, but on the run and in the open they could never hold their own. And now they were back to the bank of the river. The time for the decision had come. They must "make for it" across the river or give themselves up. "They're fighting like mad," said the latest rumor. It was the eighteenth of January. All day they fought and stuck in their positions on the south bank, the last they had. In the night they seemed to be preparing for another desperate defense. An occasional sniping during the night gave proof that they were still on the lookout,

getting ready for something. Morning came and revealed the last Turkish positions, but no Turks. In the dead of night they had made their getaway across the river, not by bridge but by innumerable little Arab boats of all sorts and descriptions. Some of them had been along the bank for many days, hidden in the little growth near the river. It was sort of a Gallipoli on a small scale, with the Turks the ones to get away. There was not a great deal of ill-feeling at losing the prisoners. On the contrary there was a good deal of congratulation from British to Turks on the way in which they had managed the crossing. "Johnny knows a thing or two, an' don't you forget it," said a philosophizing Tommy who had developed a good deal of respect for the Turk in his many encounters with him, "but we'll get him yet."

With the Turks out of the bend it was time for action along the Hai. General Marshall had by this time approached to within four hundred yards of the Turks and was ready for heavy work. And heavy work he would have.

CHAPTER VIII

ACT III—SERIOUS FIGHTING

"We could see the place easy. I think we'll be in in a few days," said a Lancashire lad as he lay on his stretcher on the deck of the paddle boat that was taking him from the trenches to the hospital. The boat, laden with wounded, was snuggling against the bank and the stretcher bearers were coming aboard to hurry the stretchers into the wards. The lad had been hit as he was plunging desperately over the flat ground only a little over a thousand yards south of Kut as though it were his own responsibility to take the town. It did look close to him, as though the army were about to march right into the town. Little he thought the War Lords had no idea of such a move.

He was one of the first wounded in the action against the Turkish defenses on the Hai. On both sides of the river the British force advanced to-

ward the little mud town of Kut. It was the final plunge.

There were among the troops a few of the men who had fought for Kut with General Townshend over a year before and who had left his ranks wounded at Ctesiphon. "I wish our blokes was still there. We'd save 'em soon enough," said one of these, to express his hearty good-will toward the force he left before the siege. But there was no need to revive any of the troops by tales of the siege of Townshend and his force. The thought had been worn in till it was simply a part of every man of us in Mesopotamia. Kut and Townshend were synonymous. To take Kut was to be worthy of the sacrifice of the great General.

Kut itself was nothing to deserve such a siege, nor to deserve so large a force against it now. Though Kut had been great in times gone by—the home of Persian nobles and Mohammedan princes—it was nothing now but a tumbledown Turkish mud town. Kut had been a veritable paradise of gardens when the great Nahrwan canal flowed into the mighty Tigris at the town. But were it still a paradise Kut would stir the men no more to

brave fighting and brave dying. Townshend deserved it. Townshend should have it. For those to whom the great General and his force were unknown except by the story of the siege it was enough to know that a brave British soldier had "stuck it" and only lost because he could not be relieved. The least these men could do was get to Kut now, almost a year late. And there was more. General Townshend had fearlessly started and nearly won the campaign against Bagdad. That must be completed.

At any rate the determination to "get on with it" was a guaranty that this show should be no tragedy. It was near the end of January, with the best kind of weather possible, almost like our early spring, and the tussle commenced in earnest. The fighting in the Kadairi bend had been tough, but this was more bloody still. This was real war. It began to look like the war on the western front. The flatness of the ground made it even worse than France. There were the lines and lines of reënforced trenches which had to be taken by storm or not at all. It meant the "over the top" of France; less imaginative, less roman-

tic than the usual Mesopotamia warfare, with long marches, routs, great feats of strategy; yet this meant more to the square mile. Now a report of the taking of trenches a mile deep was hailed with the enthusiasm that was once called out by the rout of the Turkish army from Kut to Ctesiphon, nearly eighty miles, and there were many more wounded and killed now. The "side show" was playing the same sort of game that was on in the main grounds—the grim business of the western front. We seemed nearer our friends in France. A heavy artillery bombardment, a wild charge, a counter attack, bombing out, out again, in, through, over, all mixed up, fighting, fighting. That was it now. Yet the clockwork motion still persisted. There was never a charge until preparation guaranteed success. The artillery, with airplanes and sausage balloons, was making victory sure. The sausages floating through the air were awful frights to the superstitious Turks and Arabs. "It's a Genie come to get us," they thought as they watched one wriggling in the air like some phantom of ill-omen.

One of the days of this show I remember es-

pecially. The wounded were overflowing with the tales of the exciting day and of their victories over the Turks. "I reckon it won't last long now," said a chap whose battalion took the brunt of a counter attack. "We went up an' over pretty slick. By gum! how Johnny did scrap to get back 'ome—but he did no' do it."

It certainly was a great day for Tommy. Not a counter attack by the Turks was successful. Yet they plunged back at the Tommies, before they could get settled, with the last ounce of their strength and endurance. "The British must not take Kut." The message was fairly written on their faces as they hurled themselves back at the trenches they had lost.

"I reckon all sorts o' things happen to us poor blokes," said one of the more unfortunate of the wounded. "We got into Johnny's first trench right 'nough, but the fellows with the bombs got caught in a mess of shells on the way over and we was standin' in the blinkin' fire trench without a bomb. The Turks were scrappin' like mad to get back 'ome an' there we were with nothin' but rifles to stop 'em. Johnny was near 'ome when

the reserves got to us. An' then mebbe we didn't straf 'im. Not 'alf."

About this time there was a startling event. A shell whizzed from a British gun on its way to the town of Kut. An instant—and "zip, bang." The beautiful blue tile minaret in Kut, the only minaret in the town, which had stood sentinel over the flat roofs during all the days of the siege, crashed to the ground. Nothing but the base and a jagged top halfway up remained to show where had been the beautiful little dome. The balcony on which the priest was wont to stand to call the Mohammedans to prayer was in ruins.

But others than the priest had used that balcony during the battle against the advancing British. Artillery observers had used it and felt safe because they thought the British dare not destroy the holy tower while they had Mohammedans in their army. But it was gone. The British were too near the town to allow it to stand and serve for machine guns as well as for observers.

It is an interesting fact that the day following the ruining of the minaret a notice was read

to the Indian Mohammedan troops in the army that permission had been received from the High Priest of the Mohammedan people in India to destroy that bit of sacred property.

Anyone who has traveled in the Orient can appreciate the significance of the destruction. Even though Mohammedans were fighting against each other, the property of mosques was sacred to both sides. At one time during some trouble between the Turkish officials and some Arab settlers over a district sacred to the Shiah Mohammedans, one of the mosques of the Arabs was injured. A fight ensued which rivaled the worst of the Great War in its bloodshed. To murder as reprisal for the desecration of a mud mosque was a holy act. "The sword is the instrument of Mohammed."

The Indian Mohammedans were splendidly and carefully treated by the British and they splendidly returned thanks by their fighting. And fighting Turks and Arabs was a painful business. Every sort of bullet, from the most modern "made in Berlin" to the old-fashioned bullets of the Arab irregulars, the lead turned around so it

struck like a dumdum, came down to us as "trophies" in the bodies of the wounded. There would be new faces for many, and new legs and arms, but they were a game lot. "I reckon I copped one and a half this time," said one chap. He had lost a good part of his side and had to lie flat on his chest with his chin buried in his blanket, but he wore a smile that would "buck up" the most gloomy of mortals.

For strong men laid out with wounds and still excited from the fighting, many of them on a casualty list for the first time, the inaction was the worst agony of all. The excitement they had been through made them wish for more, yet they must lie and do nothing. They did not care to have the same kind of excitement right away, but were quite willing even for that if need be. One would think that when they had taken off their blood-stained uniforms and had got in between the sheets for the first time, probably, since they left home, they would think of the home where there were faces they would love to see. But no—their thoughts turned continually to the scene of the "scrap" where they "copped" their wounds. I

had made, on a piece of rubber cloth, a map of the country where the fighting was going on, and there wasn't a man but was keen as a tiger to get hold of the thing and trace with his finger the part of the front where his company had charged and the spot where he had stopped a bullet, or a piece of a shell or a bomb. Many had a most vague idea of what part of the country they were fighting in, and wandered with their fingers all over the map reading all the words and names till they located something that sounded familiar. "I say, chum," one said, "here's all these places we stayed at when we were tryin' to get the blokes in Kut last year. Sodom—Gomorrah—Pool of Siloam—— Say, is this really the land of the Bible?" He was much disappointed to hear that the real Bible land was far across the Arabian desert. "Here's Kala Haji Fahan where we straffed the 'loose-wallas,' " said another. *Loose-wallas* once meant "thieving Arabs," but it had come to apply to all Arabs, no matter how "noble" they might be. And from another, "Let's see—I was on the other side of the Hai. It must 'ave been 'ere that we straffed 'em, an'

about 'ere that that blinkin' bit o' shell copped me in the leg. I reckon that was a scrap!" Every man had something to say about the map and every man felt that his wound was more important when he had seen the picture of the bit of ground where he had been wounded in taking his part in an advance.

The talking of men about the "scraps" did more to keep up the good spirits than anything else, for they were winning. The nurses were always glad to listen to the stories and to add something cheery to each. Before long they could tell as good tales as the men themselves. They picked up the Tommy's words and ways of thought. They picked up the army feeling that everything is common property during war. The Indian word "*pukero*" soon found its way even into their conversation. The word means "get," with no implication as to how one is to get. The word served admirably among the men and became a part of their language, along with "blighty" and many other words once Indian. It would not do to say the sergeant gave away something to a friend or to say that a Tommy walked in some-

where, found something he wanted and took it along, but *pukero* always served. One morning in the wards there came word that there was to be an inspection by the A. D. M. S. It was necessary that everything be shipshape. Somehow or other several bowls were missing from one of the wards. "Orderly!" said the Sister in charge, "we must have six more bowls." "Haven't got 'em, Sister, and there's no more to be issued." "Then *pukero* some," said the Sister. It came just as naturally as "Go to the corner grocery and get some." But there is no corner grocery in the army. It is either get an issue, *pukero* or go without.

Now at the front, the British force was almost touching the river at Kut itself. It was fighting its way to the very end of the river Hai, where it joined the Tigris at Kut. Kut lay in a horseshoe curve of the river hanging from the north by its two ends. Just west, another horseshoe, the Dahra bend, hung in the opposite direction, its ends pointing south. To get the Turkish force beyond the ends of that horseshoe meant closing them in it. Turkish guns all around the outside of

the Dahra bend, especially in Kut itself, meant to have something to say about that. They were already busy. But not these shells, nor anything else, could stop the steady march now.

The first of February was celebrated by bringing down a German Fokker airplane. Wild and marvelous exploits followed each other in quick succession. On the second, a section of cavalry again galloped up the river twenty miles past Kut and menaced the Turkish line of communication with the force. Next day east of the Hai the Turks were back to their very last line and they crossed to the west bank of the little river, bound for the Dahra bend where they would soon find themselves closed in—and no way out. There was not a Turk on the south side of the river east of the Hai. The great chain which was formed so long ago, with one end on the Tigris east of Kut, was now bringing its other end up to join the Tigris west of Kut. That would certainly mean trouble. The Turks could not afford to let the Tigris be in British hands both in front and behind. If we could read signs, however, their fears were soon to become facts. The army that was to keep back

the British from the Tigris was fast falling back to the Dahra bend.

The old licorice factory, operated by Turkish merchants, not far from the Tigris, now became the objective. This old landmark was held by Townshend during his valiant stand in Kut and enabled him to keep the Turks back from the river bank. Would it now be able to keep the British back in the same way? From across the river, in Kut, the Turks were sending over a well-directed fire. It was cannons to right of them, cannons to left of them, now as the British advanced, gradually squeezing the enemy into the loop. The fire of the British was centering on the licorice factory and its remains were fast disappearing. It had once been a landmark. Now it was a shell crater. Another day and it was a part of the British trench system. The only thing that lay between the British and the Tigris was gone. As in the Kadairi bend, the Turks were pressed back against the river bank and must get across or surrender. "We have waited for the rain and mud to stop you," said one of the young Turkish officers, taken at the

licorice factory, "but fate willed that it should not rain." Kismet, the supreme of supremes to a Mohammedan, had willed. The dictate of Fate can not be beaten by man or beast, by war implements or peace agencies. Kismet is supreme. The rain was just one day late. The day after the taking of the licorice factory it came down in torrents. At first the mud was just a thin, slippery film over the surface of the ground, slippery as ice. It was hard to walk in, almost impossible to run in. Next day it rained again, and the next. The film of mud gave place to a deep, sticky quagmire. Every footstep meant carrying a load that stuck all around one's boots from three to six inches thick. There was a wait in hopes of better weather. Still it rained. Another move, a drive through a sea of mud. But it was the last. The Turks were in their last position in the bend.

The rain coming late had served only to dampen their spirits. The half-hearted attempt to get across the river failed. There was a mistake in the Turkish orders and they were not ready to cross when the little Gurkhas, in their enthusiasm, were right up in their trenches.

Hardly a boat-load got away. The game was up. Just two months before, in the middle of December, the scrap had begun. Now in the middle of February the whole of the south bank of the Tigris was British. All during the evening of the fifteenth and the day of the sixteenth the Turks came out of their trenches with white flags tied to their bayonets. There were 2000 prisoners all together. Marching up toward the British lines, they presented a most extraordinary appearance, a long line of tired, disheveled fellows with slouchy balaklava hats and loose pajama-shaped uniforms, covered from head to foot with mud. They had shoes—most of them—but they were in bad condition. Some had strips of burlap wrapped around their feet instead. Slipping and sliding in the mud, their loose clothes weighed down by the mud in all sorts of queer positions and shapes on their bodies, plunging along toward their new masters and their lost trenches, they were a forlorn-looking crowd. They had tried long and hard in the vain attempt to keep back the infidel British. Now perhaps they could at least get some rest. They had had a pretty hard time of it ever

since the campaign started. Caught napping at first when they found the British in a great chain halfway around them, their communication always in danger, the Arabs that were fighting with them turning against them when they were losing, to plunder and murder the wounded, or deserting just when needed, they had been bitterly disheartened by the steady train of events and the steady march of the British. The rain would not come; the river would not rise as expected; the British airplanes would be just where they were not wanted. No wonder they were a pathetic lot.

"If there's fighting to be done, give me Johnny Turk," was Tommy's opinion. "He's clean right through and will 'stick it' to the finish." But here in the bend was the finish. There was no way to get out and the valiant fighters became a wretched lot of hoodlums. The various and sundry opinions about the Turk as a specimen seem to end in the fact that, though a game fighter in actual warfare, behind the lines Johnny Turk is studying Prussianism and how to make vassals of the peoples near by or get rid of them. What Germany did to Belgium, Turkey did to Armenia.

As a prisoner the Turk returns to the same game. As they passed us on the way to a prison camp, they looked for all the world like the distrustful, intriguing, greedy pupils of German Kultur.

They wanted two things: sleep and shoes. They acted decently enough, but had hard work responding to the good treatment tendered them by the British. They were put on our boats, sent down to the gulf and thence to India. We gave them some cigarettes to help them on their way, but many refused them—thought they were poisoned or loaded.

Two things were always done for them by their captors: they were given baths and fumigated; and they were given new clothes, uniforms of Indian soldiers.

With the surrender of the Turks in the Dahra bend, one great task remained—to cross the river. No amount of straight plunging, no matter how brave, could do that. The days of taking line after line of trenches by mere assault had passed. Strategy would win now, nothing else. It would do little good to put men in boats and start them across three hundred yards of river to fight their

way against a perfect rain of machine-gun bullets. That would be hopeless. Every man would be killed before a single boat could reach the Turkish shore. Somehow or other the Turks must not know of the crossing. We looked to the man at the helm, General Maude. He would do it, we knew. How was a mystery, but not for long.

CHAPTER IX

ACT IV—THE ROUT OF THE TURKS—FIRST PHASE

"We're attacking at Sanniyat!" came the word. It was like the echo of the beginning of the campaign. But that had been a feint. This was real. It was only the day after the surrender of the Turks in the Dahra bend. The news was as much a surprise as the opening of the campaign had been. For the British to take Sanniyat seemed almost an impossibility. To the Turks an attempt at it seemed madness. But madness or not, the men of Scotland, of England, and of India made the desperate charge across the deadly No Man's Land. There had been calm at Sanniyat, except for occasional showers of shells and bullets and bombs, from the time of the opening of the campaign, two months ago. The storm had long held off. Now it broke with a crash. The Turks were surprised and the British got a foothold in their

first line. But there was no time to consolidate before the Turks were back as though the British had stepped on the catch that let drive a sledge hammer. Casualties were heavy. Our troops deserved the victory if ever anybody did; but it was denied. The Turks "got back 'ome." Sanniyat could not be taken.

Busy days followed for us in hospital—the busiest of the year. But work is only a pleasure when there is such response as comes from wounded men. Some of the men had smoked their last "fags." We found them some and they were as thankful as though we had found them bags of gold. Some had no hands to hold them or light them, but when a chum stuck one into another's mouth and held a match to it a smile came over his face with a meaning that words could not express. At night the pain grew worse and the smiles less broad, but there was never a whimper. One man had copped it a little worse than he could stand and was gradually approaching the time to "go west." He whispered to ask whether he might have a fag. He had it and the lines of his face that was drawn in pain relaxed in an easy smile.

There is something very beautiful about the Tommy's "going west," to the land of the gorgeous setting sun, to the land of peace and beauty into which the great red ball of evening goes to rest. The men of that attack on Sanniyat deserved the finest.

There was something in the air that spelled a gigantic move—and very soon. The two great obstacles remained: one, the river along the Dahra bend; the other, the Sanniyat trenches of the Turks. But meeting those obstacles with a supreme effort at the same instant would be too much for the stretched-out resources of the Turks. They might hold back the attack at Sanniyat but they could not hold back attacks at every point on the river for miles.

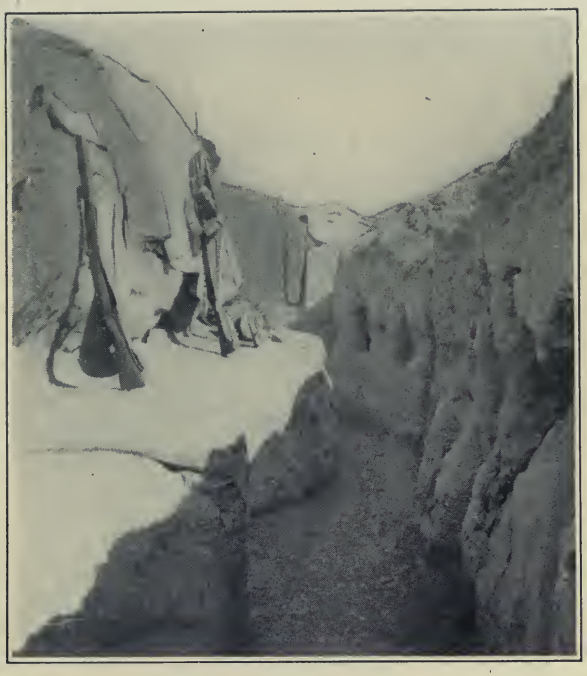
Now every inch of the British line from the Dahra bend to Sanniyat was in motion. At the Hai parties of men were rowing together, practicing for the final sprint of the big race for Kut that should take the British over the line, victors. The bridging bands of engineers were working on the bridge near the old licorice factory. The Turks saw this and watched keenly. They saw

the British get ready their gun positions and artillery observation posts. They saw them get all the bridging material ready for the leap across the river while a barrage of shells from the artillery should make hash of the trenches in the Kut peninsula. They saw their duty also. Down came their guns to the peninsula, and their machine guns to hidden positions where they could forbid the boats of the British from crossing the river. They were ready.

Five days had passed since the attack at Sanniyat. "Charge!" again rang out the order there. There was more at stake this time. Everything depended on success. The "punch" was there, and cutting their way through a wall of lead and a maze of barbed wire the Tommies, Jocks and Sepoys found themselves again in the first line of Turkish Sanniyat, the untakable. There was no stopping them this time. The counter attacks could not get back the lost land for the Turks. On moved the raging battle steadily toward the second line. Now some of that was taken, now nearly all, with the dead strewn thick and an army of wounded. It was like the desperate charge of

Townshend—just before his check. Again there were the inevitable desperate counter attacks. Once, twice, thrice came back the Turks, wild from the loss of their cherished position. All Turkey and the Kaiser besides had their faith in the trenches at Sanniyat. The fourth attack was terrific, and it seemed successful. The British left was driven out. But there was no check here. The right held fast. The game Scotchmen of the Seaforth Highlanders made a new record to add to their list. While they held back the Turks on the right and helped against the Turks on their left, the Indians came back and retook the lost position. The British could counter-attack as well as the Turks. This was the last straw. Two more Turkish attacks followed these, but the Turks had lost their first two lines of wonderful Sanniyat for good.

Something was stirring far away on the other side of the river. The British were getting ready to cross. Turks were leaving Kut to help at Sanniyat. Now they were needed at both places. They began to get rattled. But they would risk anything to get back their famous Sanniyat



A fire trench in the British trenches at Sanniyat
(*From a photograph by Mr. Weir Stewart*).

Old mud wells of the Arabs on the Tigris near Bagdad

trenches. They risked too much. Gradually the line along the Turkish side of the river near Kut grew thinner and less confident.

It was evening, but it was not quiet. Every little while the Turks heard from the opposite side of the river, a boat launched into the water, or the noise of a cart clanking along carrying bridging material, or the sound of men talking excitedly. Then they saw a boat in the stream and "let go" with their machine guns. Just east of the town a party gained their bank. There was a skirmish, a gun pulled into one of the boats, then a getaway before Turks could reach the scene in sufficient numbers. One minute there was noise near Kut where they had seen everything prepared; five minutes later there was noise farther down the river at Magasis. Slowly but surely the Turks were concentrating at Kut all the forces they did not need at Sanniyat. There was a great hubbub at Kut. The British were trying to cross! But were they?

The eastern sky was just beginning to gather a few dim traces of light when quietly, calmly, some boats started across the river far up to the

west, around the next bend of the river. While the enemy machine guns sought for crossing parties down by Kut or Magasis, the boats were launched at Shumrun, miles away. In the darkness three parties of infantry formed, ready to move noiselessly across the river. There was not a sound. Not a wheel squeaked as the carts moved over the ground; not a man spoke; not a boat spattered as it was lowered slowly into the water. At three different places the boats went across. The fleet farthest east caught the eye of the Turks and was greeted with a rain of machine-gun bullets. They only hoped to be buffers for the parties upstream, and they did their job. There were so many killed in the boats that they failed to get across themselves, but the two other parties were safer. The middle party gained a footing on the Turkish bank, almost won a position, then fell back before the fire from the Turkish machine guns. But the men in the party farthest up the river were safe. They were no sooner across than there were some three hundred Turkish prisoners and five machine guns for their prize. It was over. The British had the greater number

of men at the crucial place at the proper time. It was the goal of all military strategy. General Maude had won. The British were on the northern bank. They beat back the Turks to get a space more than enough for the engineers to work safely on the bridge. But still more had happened.

At Sanniyat the Turks were losing more of their precious ground. Almost at the instant that the boats crossed the Tigris the British attacked at Sanniyat. The third line fell like the first two. Then the fourth. More frantic counter attacks followed this. The Turks seemed not at all upset by the fact that the British were crossing behind them. Perhaps they did not know. Word evidently came very suddenly of the crossing at Shumrun. For it seemed as though the troops at Sanniyat were just getting ready for another counter attack when they "cut and ran," trying hopelessly to check the advance of the British while filling up their trenches to get their guns across as they fled. The British airmen were after them now. They brought down two Turk machines and flew low over the troops as they

fled, pouring a rain of shells into their ranks. The Turks were losing everything.

In the Shumrun bend Turkish cavalry and infantry were trying to get down along the west edge of the peninsula to keep the British from crossing the river. But the bridge was fairly springing across the water. By half past four in the afternoon the army was crossing. The bridge, built in nine hours across a river in flood, three hundred and forty yards wide, was a fact. That was the end. With the British crossing over the filled-in trenches at Sanniyat, and crossing the river at Shumrun, there was no hope for the bulwark at Bagdad. Kut must fall.

The artillery made short work of the attempts of the Turks to edge their way down the peninsula toward the bridge. They gave that up. Then one last stand they made at the top of the peninsula. They wished they might hold the British in that bend the way their men were enclosed in the Dahra bend. They stood long enough to let the troops from Sanniyat get past Kut and then it was all up. Pell-mell they rushed up the river, leaving guns, stores, shells, small-arm ammuni-

tion, equipment, bridging material, tents, trench mortars, strewn over the country in their wake. The British airplanes again swooped down on their prey, like great gulls swooping over the surface of the ocean. They were in their element —and inflicting terrible punishment.

Another branch of the service now came to life —the Royal Navy. The war in Mesopotamia was above all a river war. The army which once got away from the river without river transport and without water would surely be lost. Yet the navy had had little to do. The trenches at Sanniyat, lying, as they did, along the river for miles, forbade any boat to pass there. There were, nevertheless, a few things the insect-named boats could do. They were fast little fellows, could make over twenty knots upstream, and drew only three feet of water. Sometimes in the stillness of the night they sped silently up the stream, through the Turkish lines, shelled an unsuspecting Turkish post and darted back downstream to safety. Sometimes they helped in an attack on some trenches by acting as artillery from the river with their stern 12-pounders.

But now was the chance they had waited for from the beginning of the campaign. Tearing upstream at full speed, five of them were soon abreast of the retreating Turks, pouring machine-gun bullets into their disorganized ranks. Up beyond the Turks were the Turkish transports and gunboats, getting away with all possible haste from the approaching British army and navy. The *Firefly,* captured a year ago from the British, was far up the line. To chase it would mean to run the gauntlet past the entire Turkish force near the bank. The Turks were now making a desperate stand to check the advancing British force, and their artillery was in action. But for the monitors, "theirs but to do and die"—and they did. One after another the three larger boats pushed past the Turkish artillery. As they did so the *Firefly,* which they were chasing, opened fire over the low land from around the bend to the left. With land artillery pouring shell at the starboard side and the gunboat at the port side, it was indeed running the gauntlet. The first boat got barely a scratch, the second more, a shell through the funnel and a deck full of shrapnel—the artil-

lery was finding the range. Then came the third, H.M.S. *Moth*. The artillery had the range now, to the foot. The boat's machine gunners were swept off the deck, everyone wounded. Shells began plunging through the deck and sides, and shrapnel and rifle bullets made the deck and stacks look like sieves. One shell got into the engine room, but it was a "dud" and failed to explode. The doctor tried to treat the wounded on the gun deck but he was soon hit himself—and the wounds had to wait. Finally the *Moth* got through the rain of shells and bullets and opened her big stern six-inch gun on the Turks along the shore. The execution was immense.

The *Firefly* was recaptured along with several other boats, and the flotilla sped down the river. The *Moth* came to our pier to put off her dead and wounded. I was on a paddle boat convoy crowded with Tommies, about three hundred of them, wounded in the final dash for Kut. The *Moth* swung around a bend, passed us, turned upstream and pulled up alongside. She had eight big shell-holes in her armor, one dangerously near the water line. The stretcher-bearers brought off the

wounded and dead of the crew. They had stood at their tasks like men and as we watched the procession of stretchers leave the boat everyone felt a thrill of pride at being a part of the force that had such a gallant navy. Not long after, the *Firefly* came down under her own power, a Union Jack flying over the Turkish crescent ensign.

The accounts of the latest startling events from the mouths of the wounded Tommies were numerous and diverse. The men were so excited they did not want to stay in the hospital a minute. Nor did any of the rest of us. Fortunately there was to be new work for the stage hands in the city of Bagdad as soon as the troops should get there, and I was fortunate enough to be one of those to go to the famous city as soon as it became a city of the British. Everyone of the wounded Tommies was eager to go along back with me to follow the fleeing Turks into Bagdad. For there was no more talk or thought of Kut. Kut was a thing of the distant past. It was Bagdad we were fighting for now. One man in the cavalry was so anxious to get back with his regiment that he could not be kept in bed with his wound. He had a bul-

let through his leg, but after two days in dock he got up, made his bed, and refused to get into it again. To call his bluff, the doctors shipped him into the convalescent camp. There he was examined and found unfit, with the wound still fresh. "If you will get two pair of boxing gloves, Sir, I think I can show anyone here that I am fit, Sir," he said. "All right. Trot along on the next boat," was the response. He was the liveliest man in the camp and while he waited overnight for his boat, he entertained an audience of over a thousand wounded gathered in an opening in the clump of palms near the camp. The weather was mild enough to allow the wounded to hobble around outside and all were there who could get out of bed to watch the show. One fellow who had been a comic opera singer in London got some chums to carry him from his bed and prop him up on the stage so he could sit in the open-air "concert hall" and sing.

There were a great many such as he, who had left the advance, wounded, just as the rout was surely off for Bagdad. They did want so to enter the city with the victorious army—not that it was

Bagdad. They would probably get a chance to see Bagdad later. But the chance to enter the city with the first entrance of the British was what they wanted. But they were too badly wounded for that.

There was something to console them in the trophies they brought down from the rout. One man had a splendid gold watch made in Constantinople, once the property of a Turkish officer. Another had a dirty balaklava hat that he said he took off the head of a Turk, the rest of the fellow being nowhere to be seen. Evidently the Arabs had had a grudge against him. It was like the stories of the French front when a proud Tommy comes back to the trenches with a German officer's sword tied around his waist. Every man tried his best to get some souvenir of the Turks as his share of the "spoil."

The prisoners began to come in. Some of them were Germans. There were Germans on a Turkish gunboat, and some Germans on the gun crews of the artillery. But only a handful had got so far away from the homeland. Only one German officer was located, killed at the crossing of the Ti-

gris. The Germans swore continually at the Turks and the Turks returned the sentiment with interest. Surely the alliance of the Central Powers is no love match.

On the rout they were all in the same trouble. With cavalry to the right, gunboats to the left, and infantry and artillery to the rear, the retreat was fraught with tremendous difficulties. The army became more and more disorganized and demoralized. They tried to get their guns away but that was impossible. Many of them they threw into the river. Their wreckage was left strewn over the whole country, and there were everywhere signs of panic: bullocks entangled in the ropes and chains of the carts; guns with broken wheels; motor cars with parts of guns stuck in the engines to render them useless to the British; carts overturned and their contents lying all over the ground; oil drums, boots, hats, telephone wire, tents, everything destroyed or half destroyed; piles of equipment in flames in the attempt to make it useless to the British; oil poured over things and left, where there had been no time to finish the burning. Farther along there were the

wounded Turks whom the Arab marauders or the deserters from the Turks had caught, looted, and left with wounds of the meanest sort to die on the field. Some of the wounded tried in vain to get to the British and become prisoners, only to be stripped and cut by the bloodthirsty Arabs. For four days the havoc kept up. Four thousand prisoners, thirty-nine guns, twenty-two mortars and eleven machine guns was the toll of captures.

Then it was time to think it over. In the same place where Townshend had stopped after his dramatic capture of Kut, the new army under General Maude now stopped, at Azizie. After the halt of Townshend, had come the decision for the fatal advance on Bagdad, against Townshend's advice. There need be no decision now. The troops were already off for Bagdad. But they must stop and get settled. Eighty miles of new territory had to be organized and protected. A new line of communications was a big undertaking when they had to keep up transport from Busra to Azizie. There were all the ruins of the Turkish retreat to be collected and taken care of. The Turks had left two-thirds of their artillery,

including every one of the 5.9 howitzers, and though they had thrown many of them into the water, the guns were still visible and might be pulled back on the bank.

Nothing but encouraging word came from London now. There was no bogey of "A safe game must be played in Mesopotamia," or any discussion as to the possibilities of the force. "Transport, supply and hospital services are as well done as in any campaign in the whole history of the world" was the statement made this time in London.

Nearly a week was necessary to make everything ready to continue the advance. The Turks were again at the position from which they threw General Townshend back, over a year before, and caused all the trouble. They were too demoralized to make any great stand here now. And besides they had no guns but what might come down to them from Bagdad. There was no time for any reënforcements to come from Persia or Palestine. Both those "shows" were up in the air about the retreat. The Turks in Persia were being supplied from Bagdad. With Bagdad fallen they would

need all they had in men and guns to hold their own. And Palestine was across the awful Arabian desert. The Turks there were too far away to help—and if they did leave Palestine to help, the British would advance on Jerusalem. There was no hope for Bagdad this time. The treasured town of Kut had fallen and the trenches at Sanniyat were nothing but a jumbled mass of dirt. Great Sanniyat, on which the Turks had pinned their hope, was gone.

CHAPTER X

ACT V—THE ROUT OF THE TURKS—SECOND PHASE

It was the fifth of March, just ten days after the crossing of the Tigris. The Turks, afraid to make another stand, moved out of their trenches before the British advanced to attack. They moved right on past Ctesiphon, past the great old arch that had been the gloomy signal of defeat to Townshend and was the challenge to Maude as the British force concentrated at Azizie.

From Kut to Ctesiphon, to Bagdad. So the Arab pilots of the days of *Sindbad* staged their journeys up the winding Tigris. Now the British armies were staging their journeys in the same way. Once the last stage, to Bagdad, was denied. Now the path was open. The British force moved out of Azizie and on to Bagdad.

Fifteen miles south of Bagdad the river Diala flows from the northeast into the Tigris. The

Turks fled across the Diala and took up a position on the north bank just as the British reached the south bank. The machine guns of the Turks forbade the British to cross, yet before the British artillery could get into position after its rapid pursuit of the Turks along the Tigris a body of infantry attempted to cross in the face of the Turkish guns.

A man who was in that first attempt to cross the Diala told me the story not long after. "We got there on the seventh," he said. "With the moon an' all, the night was light as day. Before there was time for the guns to get into action, there came a call for volunteers to cross the river in boats. 'I could do with a bit of armor plate,' says one. 'Carry on!' says another. Pretty soon half a dozen boats were in the river just above where it met the Tigris. I was in one of them. We were paddlin' over easy as you please. It didn't look far across the river—mebbe a hundred yards—but when we were only halfway across, ol' Abdul gets his wind up and lets go with his machine guns. It was all up with us. There wasn't one that didn't cop it somewhere. I was luckiest of

the lot. I only got a cushy one. But we didn't get across by a long shot. More chaps tried after that and then more. But there was no crossin'. Our boat drifted downstream and we got picked up by hospital gangs an' gravediggers."

But General Marshall's force could not be checked by one failure. Any force that could do what his force had done on the Hai, in the Kadairi bend and at Shumrun, could get across the little river Diala sooner or later. It was evident to everyone that it would be sooner.

Next day the force prepared for the second attempt at crossing. The force under General Cobbe, the one which had fought at Sanniyat, crossed the Tigris to the west bank, just below the mouth of the Diala river, and swung up the Tigris across the river from General Marshall's force. The crossing was none too soon. As a last resort, the Turks were trying to get down the river on that side to hold the British away from their sacred city. There was a considerable force of them not far upstream from the crossing.

Further action hinged on the success of the next attempt to cross the Diala. Once across there, the

two British columns could march for Bagdad along both banks of the river Tigris. At night again, men were called for to cross the river. What followed rivals anything in the range of military annals. Behind a barrage of dust and dirt thrown up by a rain of shells, sixty men of the North Lancashire regiment got their boats across, and gained a footing on the Turkish bank. They found a natural defense in a dried-up water cut, near the bank of the river. Here they determined to stay, and stay they did; just sixty of them facing twenty times their number. The machine guns of the British sent a stream of bullets across to help the little force break up the Turkish attacks. Time after time masses of Turks rushed at the little position, cut their way through the machine-gun bullets from across the river and through the rifle bullets of the little band, right up to the men themselves, only to fall back, beaten by an invincible little body of Englishmen. All night they attacked, and all night were driven back. Next day the men stuck at their posts, though there was still no way of getting men across to help them in the light of day. Ammunition was getting very

low. A dozen or so were put out of it and the rest took their bullets. From the south bank their fellows were trying in vain to send over ammunition tied to skyrockets. Each time the aim was better and the rockets came nearer the bank. But not one got all the way. What remained of the sixty men had to "stick it" with what they had. Night came again, the third night of attacks on the Diala. There had been no chance for rest, but the men in the little trench on the Turkish bank of the river felt no need of rest. Midnight came and still they were holding their own. They had been there over twenty-four hours now. The Turks were getting hopeful that perhaps they had checked the advance up the Tigris. But a new surprise was in store. While on the west side of the Tigris General Cobbe's force was marching toward Bagdad, General Marshall's force on the Diala marched farther up that little river, shot a bridge across and swung around behind the Turks before they knew what was up. Some who were still firing at the men that remained of the dogged little band were bayoneted from the rear. Forty men of the sixty North

Lancashires remained alive, and they rejoined their comrades proud as Punch at what they had done. Another pell-mell retreat began, and the two forces on either side of the Tigris marched toward Bagdad, just a day's march away.

That one day saw a great many happenings in the realms of the Turks. It was the last chance for the Turks in Bagdad to destroy everything that could be of use to the British. They had been busy at the task for many days, as with Kut gone there was no real hope for Bagdad. But here was the last chance. They must get everything they could out of the city, destroy what they could not move, and get away themselves. The "brave" German staff officers who had been "directing" operations from their cool cellars in Bagdad were well on their way to Constantinople. They were not waiting till they would have to run for their lives. The German operators at the great wireless station in Bagdad had sent to Berlin the news of the Turkish reverses and the approaching loss of Bagdad, and had then destroyed the immense wireless tower. They had destroyed or tried to destroy all the railway material of the Berlin-

Bagdad Railway in Bagdad—and then had gone, with what of the railway could be moved, to the other end of that section of the line, Samarra, on their way to Berlin.

The Turks had only a few hours now in which to finish up the work of removing and destroying, and to get out of the city themselves. All the townspeople of Bagdad, whether Syrians, Chaldeans, Arabs, Armenians, Sabeans, Persians or Jews, were glad to see the Turks pack up and leave. There was hardly a dissenting voice in the general approval of the departure of the unspeakable Turks. They had been taking from the townspeople for months to feed and supply the troops, and it had become absolute brigandage during the last weeks. Not only supplies, but men also, were pressed into the service. The order was expected from Constantinople which would press into the service of the Turks every man and boy within reach. All and more would be needed to stop the British. What if they were not Turks? They would have to fight for them just the same. Fortunately the order did not arrive until too late. The British were coming and there was no time

to train fresh troops to stop them. For the Bagdaddies everything was to be gained and nothing to be lost by getting rid of Turkish "protection."

By evening the British were a few miles from the city and the Turks were ready to leave. The Turkish troops were coming up past the city in their retreat. The officers in Bagdad were piling their luggage on the last train to pull out and take them to safety. Finally, in the night, there was a great whistle, an engine chugged off slowly, then faster and faster. Bagdad heard the last of the Turks. They were gone forever.

But there was something worse now, something which, unfortunately, few had foreseen. The Kurds, great strong men who had come from the land bordering Armenia, the riff-raff of Bagdad's slums, began to loot the city. Thousands of them rushed through the streets, through the bazaars and the narrow winding lanes of the town, ripping down a door here, a wall there, fighting for the goods in the houses and shops, piling their backs high with loot; then hurrying on to hide their illgotten gains that they might rush back for more. In every street they could be heard, hacking at

doors, screaming, cutting one another, falling over each other, in their wild greed for gain.

The townspeople were now terror-stricken. They had been terribly abused by the Turks, but even under them no such terror had been roused as by this awful riot of the Kurds. None of the people found any sleep as the havoc grew and grew in its intensity. If the British would only come they would stop it all! Why had they not followed the Turks right into the city! They were near enough, judging from the sound of the guns. The inhabitants had lived through the last day of Turkish rule expecting to see the British enter at any moment. They had thought the British would prevent the looting by the Kurds. But it had come, and they were unprepared. The owners of the little shops in the bazaars, as they lay in their houses, saw visions of their goods spread broadcast in the streets or hidden in dirty hovels in the rottenest part of the city. The dealers in rugs, in jewelry, in fancy furniture saw in fancy their wares thrown in heaps by men who had no idea of their value; the rugs ripped and frayed, the jewelry broken to bits, as the

Kurds grabbed for the things and ripped them apart in their fighting, the furniture broken and torn as the great giants carried it through the streets on their backs, crashing up against each other, shoving and pulling, each one made in his eagerness to get the greatest share of loot. Everything would be either gone or destroyed!

Greater and greater grew the havoc, higher and higher the excitement, till the word came, "*Emshè*"—"get out." For the British were coming at last. The noise gradually died down, the respectable citizens, one by one, came out of their houses, where they had spent a sleepless, anxious night. Some of the bazaar keepers came to see what had been left of their stock and to weep when they saw doors battered down and their few remaining possessions lying about in the dust.

Slowly the streets filled with the townspeople, moving toward the gates to greet the victors. Some of the more desperate of the Kurds were still at their riotous work. The crowd of townspeople grew larger, more expectant, more excited.

They crowded together, pushing and pulling to get near the front to see what was happening.

Their fears of the Turks and then of the Kurds had given place to a great rejoicing at the prospect of the British entry. All different races and religions were there, dressed in their finest gowns, to greet their new protectors, their saviors; the men, most of them in their red fezzes or dark turbans and kerchiefs and their long girdled robes, the women in all their holiday finery, silk robes, lace veils, bracelets and fancy little slippers with pointed toes. They could hardly wait for the triumphal entry.

Then came the troops. They got to the railway station, across the river from the city, just before seven o'clock. An advance guard entered the city and men were immediately stationed to keep order. Excitement was higher than ever now. The welcome was warm. The Bagdaddies lined the streets as the soldiers entered, and shouted and saluted enthusiastically in evidence of the good-will they felt. Every face was lifted in praise of the savior. No more would Turkish rule set tribe against tribe, race against race, to the ut-

ter destruction of all order and hope. The British had really come.

But no sooner had they come than they were gone. There was no stopping to have a good look at the city that England had fought for through two great campaigns. There was still work to be done. The Turks had to be driven far away—up into the hills, if necessary. Bagdad must not be lost again. Up the Diala and up the Tigris the British chased the Turks. Twenty miles away from their lost city they made a desperate attempt to stop. The British were worn out by the labor of chasing the enemy all the way from Kut. There had been weeks with little rest, and hours and hours with no water. But the spirit was just the same. Again they savagely attacked the Turks. The Black Watch, the famous Scottish regiment, moved on at top speed for two nights and a day after getting to Bagdad, its men still fighting hard. The Turks fell back farther and farther. Bagdad was forever safe. All that Townshend had fought and suffered for was won. Bagdad was a British protectorate, and the Turks were far away.

British troops moving through a Bagdad street

Indian troops entering Bagdad through a heavy dust storm

(*From a photograph by Mr. Weir Stewart*).

While the troops were making Bagdad safe, I was a passenger on a paddle boat upon which supplies and fresh troops were being hurried up the winding river to the newly taken city. We were turning the last bend before the city just as the sun was rising. There, through the mist, we could see the shimmery City of the Caliphs. All that the wondrous tales of the "Arabian Nights" had told lay half concealed through that veiling mist. The domes and the minarets of the mosques so perfect in form, the clusters of palms, the fruit orchards and the old wall to keep out the hordes of "Infidels," all were there—the City of Golden Domes and the palace of *Haroun-al-Raschid.* We steamed nearer, the mist cleared, and there was the tumbledown city of a Turkish Pasha, fallen from the grandeur of the Caliphate. Nearer still we moved, and now there was more to be seen: men swarming over the ridge to the north, improving defenses, cavalry riding off to reconnoiter, paddle boats in the river, camps in the palms, and everywhere British flags. It was the British city of Bagdad.

We anchored in midstream, not far from the

first buildings of the city. As we lay there quietly, thinking of Bagdad and all it meant, there was a distant rumble of guns. Ah! Bagdad was safe. It seemed to come to reassure us as we arrived at

The British city of Bagdad.

the city that had cost so much to take. It would not be lost again.

On the west bank there were palm groves for miles, and in them the camps of the Tommies. Not far up the river was the camp of the Scotchmen, with their kilties. Weary and worn, they

were back in camp while others were doing their part in chasing the Turks. During the first twenty-one days of the rout of the Turks, the Black Watch had marched a hundred and sixty miles through the dust and had fought three decisive battles. Indeed they had done their bit. Now they could get a glimpse of the city that they had helped so much to take and to make safe.

But now that they were there, what did they see? Luxurious, gaudy, mystic Bagdad?—city of golden domes, of genii, *Aladdin, Ali Baba, Sindbad?* No, not this. Just a Mesopotamian objective, a mud town with its dust and heat. But what of that? Those men, who fought for it, would not have been stirred if Bagdad had still been the glorious city of gold. In their tired state there was no room for thoughts of such things. One thing they knew. They had had to fight like mad to take the place and now it was theirs. They were glad—that they had done their bit. Nothing else stirred them. They little thought of the Bagdad of story. Nothing on earth or in fairyland made any difference if only they could say "We won!"

Would that Townshend could have seen them there, triumphant but not boastful, glad but not conceited, proud but silent. I hope it was not long before the news reached his prison island in the Bosphorus, that he might rejoice with the world that Bagdad was wrested from the Turks and join with the world in the hearty thanksgiving that the march of the British to Bagdad was now nobly completed.

For England Townshend had made the doomed drive for Bagdad. For England he had suffered in the heartbreaking, losing fight against starvation. Maude, living and working in the wretched climate of Mesopotamia, his health failing till he faced death, fought and won, that Townshend should not have suffered in vain.

Townshend suffered for England. Maude suffered but won for Townshend and England. Bagdad was British.

CHAPTER XI

BAGDAD, THE BRITISH PRIZE

Our boat lay in midstream while the skipper whistled for space along the bank. A dozen or so paddle boats, wedged up against one another along the shore, were unloading supplies on the high river bank. Armies of coolies were swarming over the boats, the barges and the shore, marching back and forth between the boats and the shore over long springy gangplanks, piling boxes, bags, wood, oil-tins, ammunition, equipment, everything in great pyramids behind the bank and the bund. The new city had to have many things and in a hurry. The city was just changing hands. And Bagdad is far from Busra, and Busra far from England.

A month ago that bank was covered with Turkish supplies, on their way down the river to their front. Three weeks ago these supplies were disappearing as the rout from Kut came near Bag-

dad. Two weeks ago the last of the Turks were gone. Now here were the stores of the British army, piled up as though the place had always been used as their storehouse. Behold the captured city! What had been was no more. "An army moves on its stomach." Here was the great new base of supplies and the armies were proceeding north, east and west, like a fan.

We heard a faint rumbling of guns. They seemed to come from off to the east. The troops marching along the Diala were fighting back the Turks.

The boat was snuggling into the bank. It was midday and hot and dusty. I walked over the barge we were towing at the side, up to the bank, and then made along the high bund, for Bagdad, its great domes three miles upstream. More than a place for a base had been conquered. The city itself lay just around a bend in the river. In the early morning, on the way up the river, I had seen it in the distance, before the palms along the winding shore concealed it from view. I wondered what the place would be like at close range.

I heard the distant whirring of an airplane.

There were some explosions, but all from the direction of the desert—no harm done. Then quiet. A Turkish machine was flying high and toward the north. A few white patches of smoke in the air showed that Archie, the British anti-aircraft gun, was faithfully at his work.

I was getting nearer the city and could plainly see the first buildings along the river front, their flat roofs, their courtyards opening on the river wall, and the boats in the river under the windows. I got to the pontoon bridge. It was not the famous old Turkish bridge with all the star and crescent flags on it, but the new British bridge that curved across the stream just below the city. When halfway across it I could see the whole city. What a metropolis it appeared! It was the great captured city. Not many days ago it had been a city of the Turks. The motor trucks from Germany had come racing to the city and from there to the troops fighting against the Cossacks in Persia and to the troops fighting against the British on the Tigris. The great caravans from Asia Minor and from Persia had come rumbling through the city. Bagdad had distributed the

wealth of the great grain and wool regions lying to the east and to the north. For the Turks Bagdad had been the metropolis of Mesopotamia. Only Mosul, far to the north, could hold a candle to it. All the towns on the Tigris and Euphrates were mere suburbs to the great metropolis. The trade routes from Syria entered there. The trade routes from Kermanshah entered there. Bagdad was indeed the key to the East. I felt as though I were coming from a country home in America back to the city. There is always a shock about that. But what a shock when the city was Bagdad! The great Caliphate! Bagdad! Surely no other city in the world has had such a place in story. It was a place of genii.

At the center of the water front of the city were some large buildings, evidently the places of state. In the river, lying against the wall of one of these, were two British monitors, sentinels at the gate of British Bagdad. Over the tops of the buildings I could see the minarets of the Moslem mosques, and here and there along the river some British flags. The Arabs now might come to their

own under British protection. The Turks were gone.

As I walked up the bank on the city side of the river my opinion of the Arabs began to rise. There were Arabs there who seemed to have an idea of progress. There was hope. Instead of dropping the water for their canals over the bank by swinging a little basket back and forth over the water they were really doing something. One lively Arab had erected a chain of pails to hang over the river wall and had a cog-wheel arranged so that a horse could walk round and round and turn it to haul up water for the crops. Another had piloted an oil engine as far away from the mechanical part of the world as Bagdad and was running a little mill on the river bank, with oil brought to Bagdad by the British army. There were good crops in the fields and the farmers seemed to be real men, not just "plundering Arabs." Arab boys in rowboats on the river asked to take me to Bagdad, calling out *"Backsheesh! Backsheesh!"* Their boats were not the old, stone-age ballams of the southern country, but modern round-bottomed rowboats.

These were signs of progress. I thought of the progress possible now under British rule instead of Turkish. I thought of what England had done for India and Egypt. I thought—but my reveries were stopped by a most unexpected sight. I had seen flags flying over the city as I came up. Now I saw one close at hand. It was not the Union Jack but the Stars and Stripes. I thought I must be dreaming, that the sudden change of the city of the "Arabian Nights" from Turkish rule to British protection had been too much, that the contrasts had set my mind to visions of still another country. But no—there it was, flying in the breeze over one of the largest of the buildings. I hastened my step considerably. I had not seen an American flag flying since I became part of the British Expeditionary Force in Mesopotamia. What a jumble of thoughts now! *Ali Baba,* flags, golden mosques, unspeakable Turks, war, America, England, chaos, order—I was making at top speed for the building with the flag when I was abruptly stopped by a sentry standing in the gateway that led into the main road of the city. "Got a pass?" he said. "No one allowed in the

city unarmed." I came to earth with a thud. There were no more visions and thoughts. Here was a fact. The British were masters of Bagdad. It would do me no good to be first cousin to *Sindbad the Sailor* or head of the Steel Trust in America. Here was a British soldier with the muzzle of his rifle not far away. I stopped short. I had neither pass nor gun. Luckily one of the sentries had at one time been wounded and in hospital where I had done something for him, and he knew me. After a few words of advice to me about getting a pass, the sentry raised his gun. Evidently the British meant to show the native population that there would be no trouble in the city while they were running it. Every man on the street had his rifle and bayonet.

I started up the street that ran along parallel to the river, a hundred yards or so from it. On the side toward the river stood the building with the flag. I ran up the brick steps. Over the big door was a seal with a spread eagle, some stripes, and the word "Consulate." Just inside the door were sitting several fat, dark-skinned persons with big, important-looking mustaches, all

dressed up in uniforms with frills, but they couldn't speak English. They all saluted most respectfully but seemed a little hesitant. I imagine that they had not become so accustomed to their new protectors in British khaki as to know whether I was a cook or a general. I wrote my name and why I was there on a piece of paper and one of the fat persons in uniform disappeared with it behind a heavy curtain. In another moment he was back again, all smiles and bows, and saying all sorts of things in Turkish. I took them to be polite. It was easy to see he meant me to go to the second floor, however, so I obeyed and found myself on a balcony running all the way around a square, roofless court. All around the balcony were the doors and windows of the second-story rooms. The uniformed servant, *"Cavas"* as I learned he was called, bowed in the direction of one of the rooms, and I entered to find the consul standing with a smiling face and a warm handshake waiting for me, ready to reciprocate my happiness at seeing a fellow American in the far-off city of Bagdad and to answer my string of questions.

No, he had not been in Bagdad a long while, only a few months. Only since the previous consul died there of cholera. Yes, he had seen all the last excitement of the Turkish losses and had heard the guns approach. He had a rather nervous night while the Kurds were looting the city. Everyone was glad that the British had come. It would make a tremendous difference. No, he did not know anything definite about America's relations with Germany. There had been a report about unofficial war. He expected that it would be official before very long. There had been more sinking of ships. A fine building, one of the biggest in Bagdad, had been requisitioned for the Y. M. C. A. and my new home and new work would be very large.

Mr. Heyser, for that was the American Consul's name, was most kind, hoped he could see me often, and sent his head *Cavas* with me to show me my new quarters. There was a good deal of state authority in the person of the *Cavas*. He wore on his hat a very handsome shield of stars and stripes, had fancy epaulets on his shoulders, and carried a sword. The Tommies stared at us

as we passed. Never had there been anything like the *Cavas* anywhere else in the country. They thought Bagdad must be a remarkable place, with all sorts of surprises. They were right, as we shall see.

We passed many fruit groves and many buildings on the way up the wide dusty street. One of the buildings was the one I had seen with the gunboats against it. It was evidently the Headquarters of the General Staff, the G. H. Q. There were residences also, with no windows on the first floor, and on the second floor window-seats that projected over the road. Some of these window-seats were very wide and gave enough shade for the passer-by to walk in. Other buildings were shops; some with oranges for sale, some with souvenirs. The Arabs were already at work passing off old Turkish trinkets that they did not want to Britishers who would pay large prices for things that had been Turkish. They had Turkish watches galore, and Turkish spoons, and Turkish belt buckles, and Turkish coffee pots, and Turkish harem vanity cases, and Turkish fezzes

and every conceivable thing that any Turk would ever have.

There were some girls in the street, all with veils so that their eyes could not be seen. They did not cover their mouths like the Mohammedans, so they must have been Jewesses or Christians. Instead they wore veils just over their eyes or a stiff sort of board like a blinder which allowed them to see the ground but did not allow their eyes to meet those of a passer-by. It was good to see a few white people of the country. Their long silk robes or "*abbas,*" as the *Cavas* called them, were very beautiful, most of them a delicate pink or light blue. They had most artistic bracelets on their arms also. They seemed timid in the presence of the British soldiers with their guns. I imagine the thoughts of their awful treatment by the Turks were still so fresh they could not bear to see even British soldiers.

Most of the men in the street had on European clothes and red fezzes. The *Cavas* said most were Jews, some Armenians, a few of other sects. The Arabs, Mohammedans, in the streets all had on their long robes and their curious headdress.

There seemed to be no way of separating the people but by their religions, there were so many different kinds. Races did not seem to count for very much.

We finally arrived at the building. It was indeed a big affair. It was at least a hundred feet long along the street, and when I got inside I found that the two big courts reached right out to the river front. In the second court were several blossoming trees and some gardens. To the right of the court was a big dining-room, for the building had been a fine hotel under the Turks.

In the dining-room and in the court near the river were sitting Tommies, talking and looking out of the windows and over the railing into the river and across it to the buildings on the other bank. On the river, boats of all sorts were plying hither and thither, from the Arab rowboats to the fast motorboats of the Army Headquarters and Flying Corps. The sun was bright and everything glistened and sparkled. Even the muddy river looked blue. It seemed like Venice now, with the white buildings along the river banks and the boats paddling on the blue water.

Across the river, almost opposite, were things that looked like smashed machinery. An errand to that part of the town soon gave me a chance to see what it was. Smashed machinery it was indeed, the smashed machinery of the Kaiser. There lay in ruins the Bagdad part of the Bagdad Railway scheme. In the excitement of entering the illustrious city that had just changed hands I had forgotten there was something about Bagdad bigger than its position as the Turkish metropolis, bigger than the pipe-dreams of the tellers of tales which have come to us as the "Arabian Nights." Bagdad was the central figure in the great plan of German conquest of the East. The road from Berlin to Bagdad was to be the great white road of trade that was to accomplish for Germany her dream of expansion eastward. The road was certainly being built. There were plenty of remains right in front of me. Why did the Kaiser kill the goose that was to lay the golden egg? Why bring war when he might have sent his trade over the Bagdad Railway to draw all the East to him? Now the Bagdad end was gone.

The Germans had done a lot of hard work on the road. There stood the great stone and cement buildings, offices of the German Railway Company, the railroad station and the immense wireless plant. For these the Germans had brought all the stone for miles and miles from the hills of Asia Minor or of Persia, for there is not so much as a pebble in Mesopotamia. There stood near the river the stone-crusher that had crushed the stone that made the roadbeds. In the ruins of machinery that lay all around on the ground the stone-crusher stood unharmed. The Germans had realized that the British could get no stone for it, so it would be only an aggravation. On the ground lay the crumpled-up standard of a great reservoir, with the big tank, all bent, lying near. There were boilers and countless parts of machinery lying everywhere, all smashed or bent by explosives. A little farther from the river lay several locomotives, but all of them useless with parts destroyed. Some of the trucks were there also, in the same useless condition. I noticed that each of them had on it the stamp of a star and crescent and the word "Bagdad." The Sultan

was to believe that the road was his, or perhaps would be his some day if he could ever pay his debts to Germany. The railway station also had on it in big letters the word "Bagdad," in English and in Turkish, tactfully not in German. Lastly there was the great German wireless station, a tremendous stone structure with part of the stone base of the wireless tower still standing. The iron part lay bent to pieces, fallen through the roof of the building. The great tower had stood just long enough to send to Germany the news that Bagdad must fall and then crashed through the roof, dynamited by German engineers. That was the end of the Bagdad part of the great German scheme

The tremendous amount of destruction done by the Germans on their own property, the fearful loss of good materials that might have been used for peaceful enterprise, was appalling. All Asia, all the world would have profited by a railway through Mesopotamia, a quick route to the east, London to Karachi, or Hamburg to the Persian Gulf in a week. Would that the railway of the Germans had been planned to help the world, in-

stead of to destroy! As it was, it deserved the fate imposed upon it by its own engineers.

Before the war there was little talk by Germany about the military value of her railway. She thought she could camouflage that by always talking of trade, trade, trade. But when her armies swept over Roumania, and the route from Berlin to Asia Minor was safe to Germany, the spokesman of the Kaiser, Dr. Rohrbach, said: "The Bagdad Railway would supplement the Syrian and Arabian railways in throwing troops in the direction of Egypt. The Bagdad Railway is thus in the nature of a political life insurance policy for Germany." He might have added India to Egypt and got nearer to the whole truth that lay behind the railway project. Think of the audacity! Proclaiming the road to be a life insurance policy for Germany, an insurance that Germany should gain life by spreading out to take all the world in her greedy paws and devour it!

At the present writing, we are glad because of the fall of Jerusalem to an army similar to that in Bagdad, not only from the religious point of view but from the standpoint of the loss to Ger-

many. It is a time for great rejoicing, for the British push through Palestine has not only ruined the plans of Germany for getting into Egypt on rails, but has brought greater security to the splendid results in Bagdad. With a big British force in Palestine there will be no advance from Aleppo on Bagdad, to try to get back that important place. From my experience with the British army I am quite convinced that the Germans could never defeat the British in Mesopotamia anyway, but there would be a great tussle, and the army in Jerusalem has prevented that. At the same time it must be remembered that the advance of the British in Mesopotamia to Bagdad did the great service of relieving the pressure of the Turks against the British in Palestine, that great victories might be won there. The two campaigns have always gone hand in hand. One common result now they have accomplished, the destruction of the power of Prussianism on rails to the east.

To the Tommies in Bagdad the expulsion of the Germans was a great event, though they may not have realized its full significance. What inter-

ested them was to be able to write their names in a German building. The troops in France could not do that. They never got on soil that had been German before the war. Here the Tommies felt superior to their brothers on the western front. They were in German territory, for all the territory of the railway was German. On the walls of the wireless station were the penciled names of thousands of Tommies who could say some day, "We were in Germany right enough." One bright Tommy wrote on the wall, "Berlin next."

But there were messages from Germans as well. Painted in huge red letters on the walls of the big central room were the messages *"Gott strafe England,"* and "Six Tommies equal one German," and "England shall die." In the very color of the paint there was hatred. There were pictures too. One represented London, with its tall buildings close together and an immense Zeppelin over it, dropping bombs. Another represented a big English boat on the sea and a submarine blowing it up. The painting was well done. Some German had evidently taken a lot of trouble to tell the British what he hoped.

Just beside the building stood a British anti-aircraft gun, an assurance that what he hoped would never be. A large camp of infantry was in the palms not far away. Several companies were drilling.

CHAPTER XII

TOMMY IN BAGDAD

Tommy in Bagdad! Camel Caravans in New York! Bagdad Railway! Bagdad War! Bagdad Tommy! It had to come. But imagine Tommy Atkins mixing among the Eastern multitudes thronging the streets of Bagdad, taking the place of the bodyguard of *Haroun-al-Raschid!* Tommy in a French town is conceivable. There, he soon becomes accustomed to things. But East is East and West is West and this was never more true than in the old city of Bagdad.

Why, you say, is Bagdad any different from any other Eastern city? Tommy got along all right in Cairo or Bombay. But Bagdad is the city of the Bagdaddies. The Tommies were in Bagdad—but not of it. Never did any of us feel that we belonged there, nor did we have any idea that the Bagdaddies thought we belonged there. We were all misfits. We thought at the

very first that Bagdad would follow along the way of Bombay and Cairo and also become somewhat Anglicized. But we were mistaken. Bagdad stayed Bagdaddie.

It is not so easy to explain what I mean by that, though it sticks out all over the place. I have already called Bagdad a metropolis. It is to Mesopotamia and a good part of Persia what New York is to the Eastern States. One always knows a New Yorker. After a man has lived in the great metropolis for a while he becomes welded into the type. A New Yorker may be an Upstater, or a Westerner, or a Southerner, or just a New Yorker since the days of Peter Stuyvesant. A Bagdaddie is an Arab Mohammedan, or a Kurd Mohammedan, or a neo-Turk Mohammedan, or a Persian Mohammedan, or a Jew, or a Christian, either Nestorian, Syrian, Sabean or Armenian. It is always religion, religion, religion. You never get away from it. It is all that makes any difference, all that separates the people. But there is an air about the man of a metropolis that is unmistakable. He is of *The* City. All good things come

to *The* City. You must pay for the privilege of belonging to *The* City. But it is worth it.

Some up-and-doing people have such modern improvements as sewing-machines, ice-boxes, small oil engines and the like. Running from Bagdad to the great Shiah shrine at Kazimain is a horse car, with seats on the roof as well as inside. These are signs of life, and it would seem as though East and West were meeting. But not so. The East has taken a few things from the West, that is all. In Bagdad East is East.

The Bagdaddies surely realized we were misfits. One thing they very soon found out. That was that Tommy and his money are soon parted. Active service always tends to decrease one's esteem of money. Life itself is at stake and the new scale of values that grows up with that as a premise places money far down the list. Besides, on active service there is usually nothing to buy. We all felt like blowing in a tremendous amount of money in Bagdad, just because we could. As easily as our money went out prices went up. One morning I passed a shop where some Tommies were arguing with a vender for a brass

Turkish buckle, in the design of a star and crescent. The Arab *"bazaar-walla"* wanted about ten times too much. The men crowded around the box-shaped shop and clamored for different prices. The old Arab's face was impassive. His keen eyes and the roll of wool wound like a serpent around his head, as though it were in keeping with his thoughts, looked devilish. He let them argue. Then he put the buckle in a box and turned to something else, mumbling in Arabic. The men moved away, mumbling in a sort of English, probably no more profane than the Arabic. A few minutes later I passed the place again. The Tommies were back and had bought the buckle. Their mumbling had grown to open charges of "highway robbery." The Arab still mumbled, but his face did not change. He was looking far away, lifting to his lips the end of the hose of his hubble-bubble pipe. I looked at the man as I walked past the shop. When I came to a bend in the road I turned to look again. He still had not moved and was still lazily puffing at his pipe, and looking far away. "East is East," I thought as I went my way.

A little way down the road was the office of the Field Treasurer. For a hundred yards along the lane stretched a line of Arab women in their black gowns, holding English paper money in their hands, waiting their turn to exchange it for silver. While the Arabs in the bazaars were taking the new kind of money from the spendthrift Tommies they were sending their women to make sure that they could hear their money clink instead of rustle.

Throughout Bagdad the Englishman sets himself up in broad contrast to the Oriental. So different are the oriental and occidental points of view that it was a case of Tommy against Bagdaddie everywhere. It was the dull khaki against the lurid color and noise of the Orient. It was the plain uniforms against the flowing robes of the Bagdaddie men, and the beautiful "*abbas*" of the Christian and Jewish girls. There were, in Bagdad, a few women who wore European dress. They were as out of place with European dress in Bagdad as women with bare feet and scarfs wound around their bodies would be in

American streets. The rich-colored gowns of the native girls were beautiful.

One of the British divisions which marched to Bagdad was given as part of its property a compound containing a huge grove of pomegranate and orange trees. It was indeed singular to see Tommies in their khaki strolling around among the blossoms and the first fruits of these beautiful trees, sipping tea in the shade of trees whose names savor of fairyland.

Some of the alert Bagdaddies started little eating shops for the British soldiers, where they might get soda water, oranges and cakes, at exorbitant prices. Sitting in one of these one day with some friends, I noticed that just across the street was an Arab coffee shop. While we sat on chairs, and at tables, hundreds of Bagdaddie men were reclining on their wide wooden benches, like the old benches from which people used to eat thousands of years ago. Each man had his hubble-bubble pipe and was intermittently taking long puffs of the wretched tobacco that they smoke in those pipes. In our shop we were smoking English-made cigarettes. Across the street an

Arab walked along in front of the benches that lined the street, clinked some cups and his copper coffee-pot, and poured out for each man a very small amount of the rich, syrupy coffee. Those of the Bagdaddies who were not drinking coffee were drinking *lebben*. *Lebben* is curdled camel's milk, and makes a most delightful drink for hot weather—not cold but refreshing. In our shop we were noiselessly pouring out bad-tasting soda, made without all the proper ingredients. Across the street they were eating manna, "angel food." The Bagdaddies say it is what the Israelites ate in the wilderness on the journey from Egypt to Palestine. It may be so, for the manna of Bagdad is picked up off the ground or off the leaves of trees. It comes from the bark of certain hill trees and the Arab women go out and scrape it off the leaves or off the stones and send it down to Bagdad, where it is prepared with nuts and made into a kind of nut taffy. It is very good, too. But we were eating hard, underbaked cakes, or attempts at cakes. I think we would have fared better in the Arab coffee house, on the whole.

We fared better where we were in the matter

of smokes, however. Never did I see such cigarettes as the Arabs make. They put the tobacco into a big bowl, chop it with knives and moisten it with their tongues till they have a mass of finely cut, wet tobacco. Then they take coarse paper and roll the tobacco into cigarettes about four inches long. The cigarettes do not taste so bad, but the small bits of tobacco always fall out and burn your clothes. One of my friends opened up one of the cigarettes and found that the paper was from the cover of an English magazine. The Arabs had been so hard up for paper that they had made for the first thing they could find when the British entered Bagdad.

The contrast between the surging crowds of Bagdaddies and the parades of British soldiers was most marked. In the early morning the great crowds of Arab coolies or *hamals* rushed through the streets in search of work. There usually was work because there was a great deal of unloading and loading to do at the boats of the British as they brought things up to the new British base. The great "multitudes" actually poured through the narrow alleyways, under the projecting bal-

conies of the houses on each side of the streets. About half-past five every morning we heard them start on their search for work. We could hear their voices in the far distance, and at first thought there must be a riot somewhere in the city. Then it came nearer and it was almost deafening. It was like an alarm clock for everyone who was trying to sleep anywhere near the route of the crowds. Usually they ran and shouted; sometimes they walked and sang a weird sort of song, the same monotonous phrase over and over, the kind of song they used when working, making the work rhythmical and singing to keep time.

It was very convenient to have such throngs of coolies in the streets, for in the early morning all one need do to get an army of workers was to call out the window *"Hamal!"* and they would come into the courtyard till there was no more room. It reminds one of the genii of *Aladdin,* who so mysteriously did all his work. Only say the magic word *"Hamal,"* and the work is done. When a fatigue party went through the streets or a guard party or a detachment of troops on way to camp

the "multitude" sank into oblivion. "We" were the caste. The "rabble" must stay in the background. When the work required carriers the Arabs were superior, for on their strong backs they could carry almost any burdens. But not when artisans were needed. Some of the carpentry work in town was done by Arab carpenters who used tools that Jonah might have used. For boring, each carpenter had a spike with a wooden swivel and a string. Only by using his toes, both hands, and his chin could he manipulate the marvelous implement, pull the string back and forth, and turn the spike so that it would bore. It was rather clever but not very speedy.

The copper workers in the bazaar were also interesting. They hammered furiously at their work all day long, bending over it in the subdued glow of their forges. They were picturesque and their vessels were well made. But what a contrast to the mechanics of the Inland Water Transport Workshop, working on engine parts and on boat parts! Here was a machine shop sent from London.

The cavalry of the British and of the Arabs

were also typical of the difference between East and West. We think of cavalry with fine big horses and spurs and leather leggings, and a general appearance of strength and power. So it is with the British cavalry. We think of the Arab horsemen also as big and strong and on big horses. As a matter of fact the Arab horses are very small, though fast, and the Arabs are far from wearing spurs and leather leggings and looking extremely powerful. They remind one of the Arab of story. The large men, with flowing robes covering the backs of the little ponies, sit with their legs stretched out from the sides of the animals, their bare feet thrust into broad copper or iron stirrups wide and long enough to give support to the whole flat of the foot. The Arab of the "Arabian Nights," with his great turban, his twirling mustache, his long curved sword stuck through a most wonderfully colored sash, great bulging pantaloons and red, pointed slippers with toes sticking straight up, is found only partially in the Arab horseman of today, yet there is enough still in his picturesque appearance to make one realize that Bagdad is the great city of re-

nown. A fine, powerful looking Arab in flowing robes rode by me in the bazaar one day. How odd! Yet he blended with the background of Bagdad; we did not.

Bagdad had another peculiarity—dust storms. During the first days of British occupation there were terrific storms. The paddle boats, as they steamed up the river bringing stores, blew their fog-horns all the while. The dust was thicker than fog. It was impossible to see more than fifteen feet ahead, and terribly painful to keep the eyes open at all. Ashore the only way to walk was to take a quick look at the path and then close the eyes and go as far as you dared in the dark. The troops had to march miles in that sort of weather. Some of the troops entered the city in such a storm. I was working out of doors in such weather one day. It was the worst dust storm I ever encountered. Boats in the river broke adrift. All those that were trying to get somewhere had to stop and tie up at the bank. It got so bad after a while that in order to walk I had to fairly throw myself against the wall of thick dust, plunge through it for a while, then stop and

repair casualties enough so I could open my eyes and get an idea where I was going.

On such a day as that I was talking to a Tommy in the bazaar section of the town, where everything was gloomy-looking from the effects of the looting of the Kurds: doors off here, goods destroyed there; everything looking forlorn and whatever there was to be seen covered with a coat of dust an eighth of an inch thick. "Strike me pink," he said. "We might 'a' better st'yed 'ome in London an' left the dust to the Turks." Surely it seemed as though he were right. What was there in Bagdad anyway but dust and filth? Surely somebody was mistaken if he thought that was worth taking.

As I walked through the residence part of the city I thought that Bagdad's buildings were in keeping with the dust that flew around. It was dust to dust returning. For the Bagdad houses are all built of mud baked into bricks, with just enough wood to keep the bricks together—either trunks of palm trees or beams of mulberry. The outside of a Bagdad building presents a most barren appearance at all times, but especially

when the dust is flying around, for there are no windows on the first floor and the doors are heavy, forbidding-looking black barriers with rusty crescent knockers. The upper story is a little more inviting, for there is always a balcony projecting out over the street. It is impolite to look up at the windows of the balcony from the street, though they are excellent places from which the Bagdaddies may see all that goes on in the streets. If the house is on the river the balcony projects over the water and callers who come by boat can be seen long before they get to the river steps. I entered the residence of a wealthy Armenian Bagdaddie and breathed a sigh of relief as I looked at the courtyard. It was a new world. Instead of thick dust there were brilliant rugs hanging from the balcony that ran around the court. There were flower gardens in the floor of the court and beautiful furniture on the balconies and pictures on the walls. It was Bagdad at its best.

So passed the days that followed the dust storm. In the sunlight the bazaars looked most elegant, the torn-down doors and closed shops were over-

looked in the brilliancy of the wares that the venders had for sale in the shops that were open. It was far from homelike. It was truly oriental and likely to remain so forever, with the climate so different from that of the West and with the immense population of 140,000 Bagdaddies, the best that remain of the great Eastern races who are not likely to become at all occidental in their ways. We were walking on a stage in which we were misfits. But in the sunlight of the bright clear days we did not mind it. What if East is East and West is West? We were meeting there. But were we? No. Tommy and Bagdaddie were too different. Never—well, almost never—the twain shall meet.

CHAPTER XIII

FROM TURKISH TO BRITISH

British and Turks were not the first peoples to be having a "show" in the vicinity of Bagdad. That country has ever been a great battlefield, a stage on which have played the armies of empires. A feeling of awe came over me at the thought of living in a land so famous for the men and the armies that had crossed it, the great battles that had been fought and the empires that had been established there.

The great Arch of Ctesiphon which stood as a sentinel before Townshend's march to Bagdad is all that the Tigris has to show of the glories of that stage in the past. But there is more hidden beneath the covering of the dust of ages, piled up by the desert winds. The land of the two rivers was glorious in days gone by. The first empire of all prospered there when Nimrod built his great cities on the Tigris, north of the present

site of Bagdad. From the two rivers Abraham started on his travels toward the Mediterranean, to settle in Palestine. The shepherds of the plains with their flocks that I watched going off over the desert were reminders of the adventurer who founded the Hebrew race.

The ruins of the palaces and temples of Nebuchadnezzar were only thirty miles to the west, on the Euphrates. Babylon, once the most famous and most beautiful and most powerful city in the world lay there; the city from which men learned to tell time, the city whose influence spread to all lands and to all races. On the stage with a scene of paradise the armies of Babylon and Assyria played the drama of empire conquest. The great armies of the Babylonians conquered the haughty Assyrians only to fall in their turn before Cyrus, the Persian. The so-called "Tomb of Ezra" on the Tigris below Amara made fresh the mission of the scribe from the King of Persia and the return of the captive Jews to Jerusalem, across the Arabian desert. While I was in Bagdad, Jerusalem was still under Turkish rule, but we watched for the British army from Egypt to

force its way up to it. Looking at them from Bagdad, how near and how real all the places of the great past seemed!

We were in the realms we once learned about in Greek history, in the country where the armies of Alexander the Great fought against Persia for the goal of world conquest. Only a few miles south of Bagdad lay the ruins of Seleucia, the city which was to have been the capital of Alexander's Eastern Kingdom. The great arch and the buried ruins right across the river from Seleucia told the story of the Parthians, the founders of Ctesiphon, and the conquerors of the Roman forces under Mark Antony. They told of the power of the Persian monarchs when the Romans were finally beaten from the land.

And then Bagdad itself! What a part on the great world stage that had played! Every evening we could see, either at the bank of the river or in the courts of the mosques of Bagdad, Arabs kneeling in prayer to Allah whose Prophet was Mohammed. The wonderful domes of mosques, the last vestige of the magnificence of the best days of Bagdad, told of the great days of the court of

Haroun-al-Raschid, the famous Caliph of the Mohammedan world.

The Shiah Mosque with its golden domes, in Kazimain, part of the city of Bagdad, held in its sacred vaults the story of bloodshed and passion which followed the death of the martyr Ali. That death was celebrated in Busra while the British army was getting ready to advance to Bagdad. At the death of Ali and Husein the government of the Mohammedan world went, under the Sunni or Omiad sect, to Palestine, but there it was short-lived and returned to Mesopotamia. With the help of the Persians, who were Shiahs, the Abbisid rule was set up and there grew up the great Bagdad that every reader knows through the "Arabian Nights." The city was founded as the Mohammedan Caliphate in the year 762. It was then across the river from the Bagdad of to-day. Bagdad in those days was the center of everything—of trade, of manufacture, of education, of court influence; the place from which went all learning, all art, all inspiration. It was in the very center of a wonderfully fertile region. Since the Euphrates is twenty-five feet higher than the

Tigris there, irrigation courses flowed from one to the other through the Bagdad region, making of it a glorious garden of grain and fruit. The city of Mansur was built in a circle with three tremendous walls, one around the other, the middle one ninety feet high. Five of the gates which led from one wall to another were called the work of genii, built at the command of King Solomon. Bagdad drew all the great teachers, merchants, princes and priests of the world. From its colleges went out the teachings and literary works that have transformed the thought of the whole world. The most famous and the most prosperous of cities it remained for three centuries. Then with internal trouble it began to wane.

Gradually the decline of the great East began. Then came the Mongols, overrunning all the countries of the East, who finished it. The Turks followed them and sealed it. All the great dams and embankments for the rivers were swept away; the water spread over the whole land, and all the "land between the rivers," the land of gardens

and of splendor, became a country of swamps and plains with two insignificant streams.

But the Turks were gone. The British had come. There was a new hope for Bagdad. The country that had once been more populous than Belgium and was now an arid waste might again rise to heights of prosperity. Sir William Wilcox, the Englishman who has made such extensive investigations in Mesopotamia says that if the Tigris and Euphrates are again taken under control, the eight inches of rainfall utilized and proper irrigation afforded, there can be immense crops of wheat, barley and beans in winter, and cotton, Indian corn and rice in summer. Once more the land which under the Turks was a desert will be a paradise. The wars of the past from age to age brought Mesopotamia finally to desolation. The war of the present has brought hope of return to glory.

Every day brought assurance that the Turks were gone for good. One day a host of Turkish prisoners were marched through the town on their way down the river to prison camps. They were marched through the streets for exercise and for

the effect upon the townspeople. The Bagdaddies were to realize what the British had really done. In the artillery barracks there were British and Indian troops drilling in place of Turkish troops. Beside the old Persian gun in front of the building stood British sentries. Inside the building was the Turkish small-arm factory, repaired for British use. In the rooms of the Serai, where the Turkish commanding officers had had their residences and their offices, were the offices and rooms of the British officers.

I was on my way to the camp in the palms north of Bagdad when I wandered into a blind alley and found myself in a compound filled with battered junk of war. There were about a hundred guns, all Turkish, which were destroyed by their owners on the rout. They were in all sorts of conditions, some with broken wheels, some with the breech blocks removed, some with the magazine smashed. Next to them lay a dozen mines, also Turkish, the ones that the Turks laid in the river to halt the advance of the British gunboats. They halted their advance, but only long enough for the

crews to haul the mines on the decks of the British boats.

The Turks were forever gone. Nothing remained in Bagdad but captured Turkish soldiers and captured Turkish implements of war.

The tact of the hotelkeepers, who were now taking care of British patrons instead of Turkish, was impressive. The names of the hotels changed remarkably. The hotels with Turkish names immediately became the English Hotel and the Hotel King George. The big hotel on the river, not far from the old British Residence, became the Hotel Maude, in honor of the captor of Bagdad.

This was good business, as was much of the affected joy among the natives of Bagdad. But there was more in the hearts of the people than business. Even the Arabs were filled with gratitude to the new lords of Bagdad for freeing them from the unspeakable Turks.

I lunched, one day, with an Arab Sheikh, or head man. He was the governor of a considerable area north of Bagdad, in the fruitful region. He was a man of wealth, of education, of breeding.

Richly dressed in silk, with perfect manners and that graceful air possible only to a polished Easterner, he carried himself with the utmost dignity, yet seemed humble in his gratitude. He was in a position to appreciate fully what the British coming meant to the Arabs. He had been wronged steadily by the Turks; he had been threatened when he started to remonstrate for the wholesale brigandage; he had seen his friends tortured by the Turkish soldiers because they would not give enough for the Turkish army. In his beautiful French he said, "In Bagdad the Turks were what the Germans were in Belgium. They took everything and we could do nothing. Now the British have come. What a difference! Now we are happy, everyone. England has our city, but takes us into her confidence. England will help. Turkey never helped." I was amazed to hear an Arab talk so. There was hope in his tone. There was assurance that Arabs have a good class. I had begun to think so when I first arrived in Bagdad. They seemed so different from the cut-throat type of the marsh district farther south. Many of us had been surprised at the proclamation of Gen-

eral Maude to the people of Bagdad in which he called them "Noble Arabs," and in which he put to them the proposal that they follow the lead of the Arabs in western Arabia, proclaim themselves independent, and ally themselves with the nations at war with Germany. We had all rather smiled at the words "Noble Arabs," but we began to understand.

If the Arabs were grateful and happy at the British capture of Bagdad, other peoples were more so. The Arabs were linked to the Turks by religion. The Jews had been much more persecuted. So had the Christians. The people who appreciated the capture most of all were the Armenians. There was a girl in Bagdad who had been passed down from the north country to the American Consul for help. She had fled from the Turks in the massacres of the Armenians and banded together a group of girls to fight the Turkish soldiers. They had scraped together some guns and ammunition and had held a mountain pass against a vastly superior number of men. They fought all day, but the supply of ammunition gave out and those that remained had to flee.

The girl arrived, after a long travel without rest, at Aleppo. There she was taken in by a Turkish official who had no patience with the ways of the Turkish soldiers. He took her in as his daughter and kept her till he could send her to a safer place. Finally he sent her to Bagdad. Never was there a happier girl in the world than she, living in Bagdad of the British.

I attended the service in the Bagdad "Latin Church" on Palm Sunday, just three weeks after the British entered the city. The church had been used by the Turks as a hospital during the campaign and when they left they attempted to destroy it by fire. The balcony was entirely burned away and much of the beautiful inside work was ruined. The Palm Sunday service was the first big service after the British took the city and there were a score or so of men in khaki in the rear of the church, which was filled with multitudes of native worshipers. The priest met us and nearly wept as he told something of the joy he felt at the release from the Turks. He had lived through the last days trying to keep up his school and to keep his people in good spirits

against every disadvantage possible. Now he was free. The great congregation was composed largely of girls, in their pretty silk robes, or *abbas*. The men, many in European clothes, sat apart from the women. There were Sisters of a French convent in the church also. They had been teachers before the war. When the war came, their position as enemy aliens was difficult. They were not allowed to leave the city and became nurses to the Turkish wounded. They did their best in the work and at the end their beautiful church was set fire to. They insisted that the men in khaki go also to the altar and receive each a palm branch, and as we came back through the aisle there were looks in the faces of many that bespoke heartfelt gratitude.

During the Easter season our thoughts turned as at Christmas to the land of Palestine across the Arabian desert. There had been rumors for some time of an advance of the British up through Palestine. Now that Bagdad had fallen that seemed more probable than ever. We hoped that before long Jerusalem would also be a city under the British instead of under the Turks.

The world may rejoice that months before the next Easter after Bagdad's fall, Jerusalem, the "Mecca" of Christianity, the city from which we have received all that is best in our lives, fell to a Christian nation. No city is so inwrought into the tradition and emotions of the world as Jerusalem. People of all lands feel a deep sense of relief at the thought that the Turks have been driven out of it. There were more Jews and Christians in Bagdad than in Jerusalem, so the capture of the city of the "Arabian Nights" affected more people in matters of life and death than did that of Jerusalem. But to us in the West the capture of Jerusalem is much more significant. Bagdad is near to our sense of the dramatic, to our imaginations, but Jerusalem is near to our hearts.

During that Easter week in Bagdad, we had news that America was on the verge of war with Germany. Every day we looked for the telegraphic report that war had been declared. There were four Americans in Bagdad, Mr. Heyser, the American Consul; Mr. Stewart, Mr. Payne and myself, Secretaries of the Y. M. C. A. One evening we four were together on the roof of our

building looking out over the river Tigris. It was a beautiful night. The bridge of boats on the river was just visible in the pale moonlight, the palms on the opposite bank looked like specters, and the reflection of the lights from the buildings across the river made the ripples sparkle and play. We sat silently looking out over the river. From an officers' mess not far away came strains of a phonograph playing a lazy air. It seemed like a sort of fairyland, like a place that you might read about, but to which no real person ever went. Our reveries were broken now and then by bits of conversation. We wondered what America would do. America seemed so far away. We were in oriental Bagdad.

But the calm of fairyland was that which preceded a storm. It soon came with its thundering reality. "AMERICA DECLARES WAR" rang out the telegrams. The crash of the storm drove out every thought but that of war. It was fact—hard and cold. And it was right. We had wished it would come. Now we must do our part. The news seemed to say, "Get into it. Get away from

fairyland. Get into the game, Americans! You have lives to give. Give them.'' The call was strong out there in Bagdad. We were in the war already. We knew what it meant. We had seen war from the fighters' standpoint. And we wanted to get into it for our own land. To-day we are all in the Service.

While we waited for some of our brothers, the English, to get out to Bagdad to take the places of the no-longer-neutral Americans, spring was changing into summer. Summer comes early in Mesopotamia. One afternoon a man fell in the street near our door, struck down with the heat. We carried him into the shade and poured water on him till he came to. After a good rest he was able to go to camp. That was in the middle of the afternoon. The temperature was above a hundred. About twelve hours later, sleeping on the roof, I was cold with two thick blankets. Mesopotamian summer was no joke. One of our number went to hospital with dysentery. Another was laid up with fever. There was nothing for it but to ''stick it,'' however. Everyone else was doing it. ''Why don't you go to France?'' said a

Tommy. "Bullets ain't half so bad as this blast from hell."

It was hard fighting now and half the casualties were from heat. I went, during this weather, to the trenches about fifty miles north of Bagdad. Neither British nor Turks could do much fighting during that heat, though it was quite livable at night. We longed for the nights to cool things off. We were quite happy then. I shall never forget a night that followed one of the worst of the days. Just behind the trenches we held a concert, right out on the plains. There were plenty of men who had had experience in stage life and many volunteered to "do a turn." Three thousand men turned out from near and far along the line to get the relief of a light show after the deadly heat of the day. Some of the men came over five miles. It was worth it. The comedians that got up on the shaky stage made of boxes were worth the price of admission if it had been a ten-mile walk. For scenery there was the brilliant starry sky, for footlights a few ordinary lanterns, and for a curtain—nothing. But the show was all the better for that.

The cleverest man in the show was the sort that you have only to look at to laugh. He had his blouse turned inside out, had a Turkish fez stuck on the side of his head and a skirt of red silk tied around his waist. He had found a use at last for the keepsakes that he had had hidden in his treasured kit bag for months. He was "Grandmother from up country come to see London Town," he said. He strutted up and down the boxes "seeing London," getting mixed up with busses and "Bobbies" and having something humorous to say about each and every characteristic of the city. Remembering that we were all, at the time, out of soap, with no prospect of getting any issued to us for months, he gave us the droll little song with a moral:

Soap and water.
Just a little bit of soap and water
Any old kind of weather
They both go well together.
Take a tip from grandma, every
Mother's son and daughter.
If you want to get on in London Town
Use soap (boom! boom!) and water.

Next he did some mimicking. His best was at the expense of the Scotchmen. He said a Scotchman

came to London and, in search of work, became part of a little theatrical company. His part was to be the echo for tragic words of the hero of the play. Our actor then became in turn the hero, the heroine and the echo. Suddenly he jumped high in the air, knocking one of the boxes to pieces as he landed on it. "Heroine runs away with the villain," he explained. Next he paced up and down over the boxes, tearing his hair and looking most dejected. "Hero angry with heroine." He took off his fez and held it in front of his face. "Echo hiding behind the scenery." Again he became the distracted hero. "Alas, alas!" He held out his fez and from behind it came the echo, "Alas, alas!" He returned to the hero, and looking desperate shouted, "She flies away!!" and the echo answered "Flees awaa," in broad Scotch drawl. The cheers from that mammoth crowd were so great that the Turks must have heard them.

Many a night we had such a show, and on the cooler days which came once in a while we managed to get enough outdoor sports going to make life a pleasure. We were quite happy. The Turks were far from Bagdad. Even Samarra, the "rail-

head'' of the Bagdad Railway as it moved up the Tigris from Bagdad, was in British hands. Most of the railway, a thousand miles of it, runs from Constantinople down toward Bagdad. Then there is a break of four hundred miles and the British had the rest of the line. The Russians had forced their way over the Persian hills from Kanikin and had joined hands with the British near the Persian border. We expected that with cooler weather the combined British-Russian army would march on, over the four hundred miles of break in the railway, and get into a country where fighting was good—perhaps make a drive toward Constantinople. ''On to Bagdad'' had been a wonderful success. Why not ''On to Constantinople''? It might have been but for the trouble in Russia. With the heat of the plains and the trouble inside her army the Russians retired from Mesopotamia and left the British right flank unprotected. There was nothing to do but ''dig in'' and determine to hold the position without the Russians. It was rather hard after such high hopes. But still after the great victory at Bagdad nobody

could be down-hearted. Perhaps the British in Palestine would make the advance instead.

We were happy in the trenches, anyway. There are lots of things worse than heat and Russian civil wars. And besides, America was in the war.

When British and Russian forces came together in Bagdad

(From a photograph by Mr. Weir Stewart).

Tommies interested in the telegraphic report, "America declares war"

(From a photograph by Mr. Leonard Dixon).

CHAPTER XIV

BEHIND THE SCENES—THE Y. M. C. A.

During the show, "On to Bagdad," I was a stage hand. It was my one duty to be on hand to help the actors as they went through their parts. But in my position I was endeavoring to do one special work, that of the Young Men's Christian Association.

On all the fronts from South Africa to Flanders and in all the great training centers the Y. M. C. A. has done its splendid work. During the thrilling campaign up the river Tigris to Bagdad there were some episodes in the work behind the scenes that were in keeping with the dramatic nature of the war.

Everywhere that the Y. M. C. A. goes there is a "hut." A hut may be almost anything. My hut in Bagdad was a has-been Turkish hotel with spacious courts for entertainments, meetings and games. My hut at the trenches north of Bagdad,

in the desert region, was a row of tents with all outdoors behind the British lines for recreation. There was also a spacious dugout, dug with much sweat of brow, for use on special occasions, built more against the hurricanes and dust storms that bore away the tents, than against shells. At hospital my hut was the whole hospital, for the wounded could not walk around very much. Each was a hut. Each had the same requisites: a space, something to make music with, a place to write and read and talk. That makes a hut.

What is done with the hut rests with the man in charge. Just what he will do depends mostly upon what he does best. He may be a lecturer, or a musician, or an athletic director, or an organizer, or a preacher. But whatever his forte, his responsibility for helping to lift the lives of those around him by his influence, is the prime factor. Being a musician, my work naturally centered in the evening concert. When there was no call for that I had to take a shot at something else; at running off sports, or even at lecturing and speaking at meetings.

What it meant to be such a stage hand in Meso-

potamia is clear from just one extract from my diary written at the trenches in the line defending Bagdad, in my dugout into which I ducked for a few hours' sleep in the cool of the night.

FRIDAY:

Fritz was over in his airplane before breakfast. No scrap. Archie missed him. Lieut. C—— came into mess at breakfast and asked me to play for the men in the surgical tents. He said they were "fed up." Captain M——, chaplain of the — Brigade, came in to ask to borrow the piano for a few hours. Lieut. P—— sent in the hockey sticks and Sergeant T——, leader of the ——shire Regiment soccer team, brought in the football used in the League game. His team won. Several men sent in their names for "turns" in to-night's concert. Note from S. & T. said no more firewood till next week. Transport delayed by dust storms. The orderly in the library went sick and sent word he could not tend to the books. Captain D—— sent in several bags of fruit which he took from the Arabs who were selling it without licenses. Sold it cheap to the men. Steve fixed films for tomorrow's movies. Bobbed into hospital for a few minutes and gave them a tune. There were a good many fresh cases in. Saw Padre T—— and asked him to speak at the Sunday meeting. Got Anderson for lecture on his experiences in France. Took most of the afternoon to complete the program for the concert. Had a good football match after tea. Heat not so bad today. Cooled off at swimming parade before concert. Over a thousand at the show. Pet, the dancer, especially good.

A Tommy I hadn't seen before came in tonight after the show. Said his best chum just went west. He felt kind of low. Said he wanted some one to talk to.

Some days were fuller, some less full. So far as there was any routine it was: morning, interruptions and adjustments; afternoon, errands and getting ready for the evening program; evening, athletics and the program.

Morning and afternoon tried to prove that running a Y. M. C. A. was mostly doing business with this person or that. Evening and night tried to prove that it was the opposite, that the work was just a getting together of men with men. The night program I looked forward to. The morning program I went through with. The thing that made the night program so enjoyable was that it was never necessary to go to any trouble to get a crowd. Going to the Y. M. C. A. was a habit. The Tommies came seven evenings a week. They rarely remembered when it was Sunday, but when they found hymn books on the benches or on boxes they stayed just the same. The Sunday evening "singsongs," where the Tommies called out their favorite hymns as long as they cared to sing and

then listened to a short practical address, were as enjoyable as anything else in the week. And they helped more. They brought us all together in the best possible atmosphere.

When it came to the concerts and moving picture shows Tommy was fine. No matter what might pass in his ordinary conversation he never acted anything but a gentleman in an evening show. Whether it was the influence of the place he was in or not, I do not know. But I do know that Tommy was always a gentleman. At one concert that I got up a Tommy started off on a parody that was far off-color. It was not necessary to stop him. His comrades did that. They hissed and looked daggers at him till he sat down for shame. They would be the same anywhere, except perhaps in the wet canteen, and the Y. M. C. A. took the place of that.

There was a surprising amount of remarkable talent for concerts among the British troops. The average Tommy leaned toward sentimental songs, but when I hit upon a comic singer or an acrobat it was usually a find.

I was going through a camp one morning, in

search of talent. As I walked between the sleeping huts of the men I was asked over and over again, "What's on at the Y. M. tonight, mate?" I inquired about talent of a comical nature and was directed to a certain tent. I stopped in front of it. There were eight or ten men inside. "Concert at the Y. M. tonight," I said. "Who can do a turn?" Immediately two looked up. One said, "I'll sing 'The Sunshine of Your Smile.'" The other said, "I used to sing the 'Rosary.'" I said we had enough sentimental songs and what I wanted was something snappy. "We have enough to go on with but if there is someone that has something good we'll put him in somewhere," I said. The man I wanted was a clever acrobat but not too anxious to give a hand. There was silence while the thought sunk in that he was not needed. Then the rest began to look at him and call out, "Go on, Lefty!" "Do a turn at the Y. M.," or "Go on, Lefty. Do the flip-flap for the boys."

Such were the diversities of possible talent and the ways and means of getting them together, the programs always turned out something like the following:

1. Comic song: "I like a Nice Mince Pie."
   Pt. Doyle, 13th Hussars.
2. Sentimental song: "Thora."
   Sergt. Blackwood, East Lancs.
3. Sleight of hand tricks.
   Captain Dunlap, Royal Engineers.
4. Baritone solo: "Glorious Devon."
   Sergt. Gilder, Devonshires.
5. Comic sketch: "Hang the Telephone."
   Men of the Australian Wireless.
6. Violin solo: "Hungarian Dance."
   Mr. Clark, Y. M. C. A.
7. Comic song: "The Major."
   Staff Sergeant Bailey, Flying Corps.
8. Buck and wing dancing and acrobatics.
   Cpl. Roberts, South Wales Borderers.
9. Scotch ballads.
   Pt. MacKay, Seaforth Highlanders.
10. "Nonsense by the Yard."
    Lieut. Page, R.A.M.C.
11. Song: "Toreador."
    Sergt. Adams, Hantshire Regt.
12. Comic song: "I'm the Skin of a Spanish Onion."
    Pt. Wilson, Royal Field Artillery.
    God Save the King.

Such concerts as those might be excelled on stages in London or New York, but no concerts could be more appreciated than those on the desolate plains of Mesopotamia. Everybody went, and

everybody had a good time. At one of the concerts at Amara, the big hospital center, there were fifty nurses and twice the number of officers at the show, as well as all the men that could get within earshot.

With the great hospitals in Amara went the big concentration depots where the convalescent and recovered men were assembled to be sent back to join their units in the trenches. A good many had to spend a long time in Amara before going back to their units, and during the stay welcomed anything that could keep them interested. Many wanted things more serious than concerts. While I was there, there was a demand by so many men to learn a little of the Arabic language that we started an Arabic class and one of the secretaries took lessons from an educated Jew and kept enough ahead of the class in his studying to be able to teach the soldiers. In several of the camps there were Bible classes that met once a week under the leadership of secretaries. Among all ranks there were men who had in their days of civil life taken a real interest in things spiritual and also men who on active service had learned certain

lessons which made them seek power higher than that of man. I found among the privates in our station two men who had had theological training and with their help led a class which started with fifteen and grew steadily. Often wounded men in hospital, if they could leave their beds, came to the tent in which the class met.

We had a great treat at one time when a man who has been doing wonderful work for many years as a missionary among the Arabs came to Amara to tell of his adventures and of the splendid work of Missions in relieving the suffering among the unfortunate people in Arabia. As large a crowd turned out to hear him as had turned out to anything of lighter nature. Our leader, at the head of the Y. M. C. A. work in Mesopotamia, Mr. Dixon, a Canadian, was quick to find such speakers as he to send to the various centers along the rivers. Though the work at the front and in the concentration camps behind the lines was much more interesting and exciting and healthful, Mr. Dixon stayed year in and year out at the big base in Busra, managing the work of the Y. M. C. A. throughout the force. Once the

climate of Busra and his steady labors so weakened him that he was forced to get away from the country, but he returned with all his good spirit to carry on the work, directing and encouraging the secretaries in base camps, in the hospital centers and at the front.

The work among the wounded in hospitals was as important as that among the men in fighting trim. "Honest," said a fine-looking soldier who had spent two long months in hospital, "if it weren't for the games and books and things that the Y. M. had, and the phonographs and concerts, I think I'd have gone crazy." There were many who felt the same way. In the Mesopotamia hospitals the very desolation of the country made it hard to enjoy all that the splendid doctors and nurses did for the men. It was especially so in the field hospitals. It was worse than being laid up in France. There was no smiling scenery to look out upon. There were no men and women in civilian clothes to come around and cheer up the wounded. There were no peasants, no sights, there was nothing but the monotonous life of war. The Arab workmen or the little Arab girls that

carried on their heads baskets of mud to make walls for new buildings only rubbed in the foreignness of the country. It was not "blighty" by any means.

The thing that did the wounded the most good was the moving picture machine, with films of all sorts from current events to fairy stories, and with scenes laid in well-known places which brought the men home to scenery they had known long ago and longed to see again. The Tommies fairly jumped out of bed when they saw the machine entering the ward. "Is it Charlie Chaplin to-night?" they always asked. And then a more witty chap would say, "Don't you know they've cut out the mustache? Charlie's out of a job." Army laws had ruled that no man might have a little scrubby mustache. He must have a real one or none at all. Many a man had to shave off regretfully the little tuft that he had nursed so lovingly on his upper lip. There was always a crowd around as some offending "smart dresser" cautiously, heroically, sacrificed the handsome little "Charlie Chaplin" mustache.

The concerts and meetings were the things of

every day. But the work in Mesopotamia was full of surprises. There were opportunities for helping the actors in the most unusual places. I assisted an Indian Secretary one evening in running off an entertainment for Indian troops. None of them spoke English. None of them was Christian. But the Secretary's service was as real and the men appreciated it as much as anyone could. To advertise the entertainment signs were put up in seven different languages. After the concert a Subidar major, a Mohammedan, came to the Indian Secretary and gave him five rupees to help carry on the good work for his men.

There was service for the Turks as well. The night after the capture of the Turks in the Dahra bend, just above Kut, it rained hard and there were no tents for the Turks. My friend and partner in the Y. M. C. A. work, Mr. Stewart, also now in aviation, opened up all the Y. M. C. A. tents within reach for the use of the Turkish officers. They slept on the benches and tables and floor. But they were dry. No matter who they

were, they should not sleep in the rain if it could be helped.

Then came the advance to Bagdad. Mr. Stewart secured a large barge and packed it with boxes of biscuits, potted meat, canned fruit, canned milk and cigarettes. He secured from the transportation department permission to take it along and had it made fast to a steamer following on the heels of the troops. There was a halt and the barge caught up with the troops. While the men stopped to get a little rest before the next stage of the march they crowded to the river bank and stripped the barge of its contents. They had been on iron ration for several days and were likely to be so again for a long time. They were going to make the best of the opportunity to feed up. Each man was limited to one rupee worth, but it went, ton after ton, till the barge was empty. Tommy was hungry and wanted a smoke. He met a friend and was happy.

Another unique experience was the turning over of the Turkish hotel in Bagdad for our use as the Y. M. C. A. The authorities informed us that the building was requisitioned for our use,

that the owner would be paid by the government, but that we must get rid of him. That was harder than it sounded. The old neo-Turk could not understand the deal. He had been treated pretty meanly by the Turks and could not see how he could expect anything different from the English. The Turks had wanted his building, so they discovered that he was a spy and deported him. Then he returned to Bagdad and found his dear building almost ruined by the Turks. He had gone to a lot of trouble about it and had hopes of using it to fleece the British when they came in. Now it was gone. He proposed a plan by which he should give us so much a day if we would allow him to run the hotel. Everything failed and he went away for a while. He came back and the place was running as a big Y. M. He looked around and saw what was being charged for things and what the expenses of the improvements were. He also thought of how much he would have charged for the same things—about three times as much. Finally he thought of the offer he had made us. Then he gave it up. We were new to him. Never had he seen in all Turkey such a

way of doing business. He bought a plot of ground on the main street and started up a Persian Garden where he had music always playing and good things to eat at delightfully high prices.

The Y. M. C. A. of Bagdad was moving along at a great rate. The courts were used for concerts, the hotel dining-room for the food counter of the canteen. The underground part, the *serdab,* was the library and reading-room. We had a great many books which were kindly sent in by the American Consul. The Kurds when they looted the city left quantities of books strewn about the streets and the Consul had them gathered up for our library.

That part of the work was easily started. But the real task in Bagdad was to fit ourselves into the native life of Bagdad so as to get the greatest good out of the city. Mr. Stewart, after considerable hunt, located a baker who built a bake-oven in the building and baked quantities of delicious cakes. Next he found a man with enough left of his soda plant to set it up in our place and he too put out his wares for the use of Tommy Atkins in the Y. M. C. A. It seemed as

though we were making pretty good use of Bagdad's possessions. We could not have had any of these things farther down the river. Bagdad was so new to us we did not at first realize its possibilities. We found an Arab carpenter who came with an assistant and lived in the building, working all day long to get things in condition. We would not have trusted an Arab inside our tent before we got to Bagdad. For workers around the building we had little Bagdaddies who had been pressed into the Turks' service and had deserted when the Turks left the city. For waiters in the elegant Officers' Tea Room we had little Armenian boys, all dressed in white suits. Surely that was not much like Mesopotamia. Then to cap the climax I set out to make something which had hitherto been unheard of for the Tommies in Mesopotamia—ice cream. I had very little idea how it was to be done but I was hopeful. I finally found an Arab with enough cows so that he could supply me with milk for the ice cream if I could get the ice. Thanks to the Supplies Department of the British Army I got it. The Turks had left an ice machine in Bagdad

and the British had brought up another, so there was plenty of ice available. I found a tin worker in the bazaar who made some little freezers, cylinders of tin inside larger cylinders of wood, which an Arab could turn by hand. One thing more was necessary, something to eat the cream with. There were not enough spoons in Bagdad to supply what we would want. So I experimented with cones. Tommies had never heard of ice cream cones, but that was no proof they would not like them. With little tins in which the baker baked the cakes we experimented with dough to make patty cases. It was something of a problem to make dough stiff enough so ice cream would not melt it, yet soft enough to eat. After considerable experimenting we finally arrived at the desired combination, and everything was ready. I ordered the Arab to bring his cows. He came at daybreak the next morning, with five or six cows and three wives; at least I suppose they were wives. They walked right up to the front door and waited. I leaned over the roof railing in my pajamas and told them to start work. The wives set at the milking and by the

time I was down they had a pail quite full. The Arab, having received orders to return and repeat the performance at noon, led his charges away. Then a big Arab who was hired to turn the freezers took the milk, boiled it, let it cool, and set about making the ice cream with milk, sugar, a native vegetable matter that thickened it, and jam for flavoring. I put up signs "ICE CREAM CONES AT THE Y. M. C. A." Tommy did not know what ice cream cones were but he knew what ice cream was. The crowd that came in the first day was proof of the appreciation. Each day the crowd increased. American ice cream cones were a success with the British soldier in Bagdad.

It was not long after this that I was with the Tommies at the front. It was over a hundred in the shade one afternoon when I heard a Tommy say to another, quietly, "Say, mate! If you go sick you want to get sent to Bagdad. They've got ice cream and soda, and dirt cheap, in the Y. M."

Twice, while in Mesopotamia, I had the thrill of having my work inspected by a general offi-

cer, one of them the Commander in Chief, General Maude. General Maude looked over the Bagdad Y. M. as he looked over his army, not letting a single thing escape his notice. He said little but seemed pleased. The other general, General Caley, with the idea of finding out what the men thought, stopped in front of a man who was drinking a mug of lemonade and asked him how his lemonade was. The Tommy brought up his hand to the side of his head quivering like a leaf. He spilt most of his drink in the excitement of being spoken to by the general as he blurted out, "Oh! Beautiful, sir, beautiful."

He was pretty nearly right. It was beautiful to have a cool drink that kind of weather. The heat grew steadily worse. In July the orderly in charge of the canteen in one of the camps went crazy with heat stroke and died; a helper got fever and had a temperature of a hundred and eight, yet pulled through. In a machine-gun company next door eighty-seven men went under from the heat in one week. One of our Y. M. C. A. secretaries died and several others had narrow escapes.

I do not know whether as a flyer in the service of Uncle Sam I shall be in such need as were the men in Mesopotamia, but if so I pray that there may be a Y. M. C. A. handy. When I go again to the front, this time as actor, not as stage hand, I hope that I may receive from the stage hands what I tried to give when I was one.

Bazaar Chiefs, the commercial geniuses of Mesopotamia

The author, as guest of the Royal Flying Corps, beginning early to learn to fly for Uncle Sam

CHAPTER XV

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

When I first went among the British, America was neutral and there were small prospects of her soon becoming combatant. As an American among Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, Welshmen and Australians my position was peculiar. The feeling against America among the forces at the front was tremendous. The Tommies had a little poem that they repeated at every possible occasion. It had a verse for every letter in the alphabet. When they came to the letter "Y" they said:

> Y is for Yankee. He's living in clover.
> He'll come in this war when it's jolly well over.

Even in April, when America did come into the war, they said "Oh, well. Now that we've been fighting for three years and saving American lives America comes in and takes the credit."

But that did not last long. It was soon evident that if America had not come in when Russia went out there would have been a most lamentable state of affairs, and during my last days with the British I heard nothing but good spoken of America. Cockneys were the most bitter against America while we were neutral. They became the most joyful when we came into the war. When the King sent to our President a congratulatory message on the declaration of war, that was the end of all bitterness. If the King said it was good it was good.

During the fall of 1916, when the feeling against America was strongest, the bitterness of the privates and non-commissioned officers was indescribable. The feeling that they were giving their lives and Americans were holding on to theirs was at the bottom of it. They talked so about it that the sentiment grew to absolute hatred of America and all Americans. Some men in our tents were talking about America one evening and as they talked their language became more and more violent. When they had gone on for a while I said, "I'll have to take all that cursing to

myself, for I am an American." They immediately stopped and one of them said, "Oh, beg pardon, sir. I didn't know you were an American." It might seem curious that they knew so much about Americans and yet did not know one when they saw him—but they were just talking, just patting themselves on the back for not being slackers.

The attitude among thinking Englishmen is, I think, pretty well expressed in something a friend, Captain D—— of the R. A. M. C., said to me. "You know, the bitter hatred toward you Americans is a curious thing. We officers feel it much less strongly than the privates. My personal opinion is that America is staying out for purely financial reasons. I am dead against the interests that are holding America out but I think that as a nation America is for us. I am fearful that the Germans in America are keeping her out. That seems to be the feeling generally. The privates all say America 'daren't' come in. They vent their hatred against all Americans since they know practically none. But I am sure there is some of the good old Anglo-Saxon blood in Amer-

icans, even today. I have known few Americans, but I have always had a liking for them. To us Englishmen there is always a sort of romance about knowing Americans or going to America. It is so new. We feel as though we were going into a new kind of world, yet one which down underneath is just like ours. You are such a lively lot—lots of go and all that. We think of all Americans as a sort of mixture of cowboy and trust magnate. We can't help liking you even if we are bitter toward America for not coming into the war. And say—why are you out here yourself? Have you a family in England? No? Then if they let some of you come and help, why doesn't the whole country come over?"

That last question was on the lips of everyone, of every rank. "Why are you helping us and not all?" It did no harm to have them look at it in that way. It did the British good to see Americans eager to be of use to the Allies. They liked it, and I do not wonder. The British have taken a lot of the brunt of the war ever since it started and it helped to feel that the fact was appreciated by us, their brothers across the water. They

realized that the time must come when their brothers, the Americans, would have to take the stand either for or against England. They knew that the only hope for the world was for England and America to be drawn closer and closer together in bonds of brotherhood, and they gave to us few Americans with them in Mesopotamia the best of the fine treatment which English culture has taught every well-bred Englishman. For all they said about America they had a deep love for it way down in their hearts and they knew that we had the same for England.

Soon after New Year's Day of 1917 a rumor went around Mesopotamia that America was going to declare war on England. I could see among the officers I knew best a very depressed feeling. They had all put in their words of hatred of America, but when it came to thoughts of a real break, that was very different. They did not say much but they thought. They thought of all the natural bonds between England and America, of the English blood that went to make up the great republic, and felt as though they were going to have to make war on their brothers.

At lunch, one day, the Colonel, our commandant, said, "Well, Clark, we'll have to put you in jail, that's all." We tried to laugh but it was impossible. There was a thought in the minds of all at the table, the thought of the frightfulness of brother fighting against brother. Thank God it will not be! Thank God that Englishmen and Americans may be "brothers in arms" and "brothers in hearts"!

One never appreciates a man till he is in his shoes. When one has to buck the same problems as another he finds wherein the other was strong or weak. Americans have to be with Englishmen long enough to feel the influences under which they live, in order to appreciate them. There is no better way of getting to know the English than to live with them on active service. They are themselves, pure and simple, there. If one year with the English on active service was not enough to form a definite appreciation of them, it at least gave examples.

The man I admired most among the English was a captain in the R. A. M. C. He was a regular army officer, strict, but kindly, and as strict

with himself. He was tall and straight and perfectly dressed. He was graceful and most courteous, no matter how aggravated he might be inside. When things went wrong he was always the first to say, "What of it? Carry on." I never heard him speak sharply, but he was always insistent. He took a pride in his men, they took a pride in him. His word was absolutely ironclad. His punctuality was the same. I used to set my watch by his arrivals at parades. Yet with all that, in America we would call him a snob. He was distinctly of the "upper class" and realized it. To him the commission meant he was of the "army officer class." But there were among us, officers who joined after the war began who were distinctly not of that class, and there were some who had worked their way up through the ranks. He was not chummy with these, but he was always pleasant. They never felt out of place. If they were British officers he extended them the right hand of fellowship. No matter where they might stand in relation to court society, they were British officers and were taken in without a grudge. But there was still underneath some-

thing of the royal society feeling. I went to him one day to ask him to detail a certain amount of transport to me for my use in the work for the men. It was a rather large request to make, but he was very pleasant and said he would see to it. When the time came something went wrong and I did not get the transport. There had been a hitch in getting the order through the Sergeant Major—the usual excuse. A little later I wanted the same thing. I chanced to be having tea with the captain. I mentioned the thing to him there. There was no more seeing that it would be done. He wrote out the order while I was with him and I got what I wanted. I had met him on the social grounds of the British officers' mess.

A man much like the one I have just described, yet in many ways very different, was an English Lieutenant in the Indian army. He had served many years in India and had acquired a good deal of the Oriental's outlook on life. I traveled with him for some time on an ocean steamer, in Eastern waters. The rest of the passengers on the steamer were from England or from America. None of us really understood the Lieutenant. He

loved to sit and look out over the water for hours. He was not in love. He was too old for that. It was his Oriental training. He never broke into a conversation to get in one of his thoughts. When he was on deck or in the smoking room with one or two others he would say something, and always something worth while. He was never impatient, never critical; always calm, always self-possessed. If we made very slow time it did not trouble him in the least. He had acquired that attitude of the Oriental which gives time very little value. He was anxious that we do the best we could under the circumstances, but nothing more. It was what one did, rather than the results that mattered to him. His conviction was that of the Easterner—"You have your ideas and experiences. I have mine. I shall not try to impress mine on you and I expect the same treatment in return." The Lieutenant, because of the number of officers over him who had been killed, was the logical candidate for the commission of major in his command, but on account of the rules of the Indian army he could not be promoted until he had served the required number of years, though men with

less experience in active service than he were put over him. No one would have found that out from him. Little difference did it make to him whether anyone else knew anything about his burdens. He knew them and had to bear them. Others could bear theirs. His silence was too much for one of the fresh Americans on board. "Queer duck" was his estimate. But, curiously enough, before the end of the voyage, the Indian officer had won his way to the heart of every passenger aboard.

The man who was above everything else a fighter was the Scotchman. He wanted to have a thing finished right away. The English officer from India was perfectly willing to wait patiently for results, so long as things were being done right. But not so the Scotchman. The code of the Scotchmen I knew in Mesopotamia seemed to be: "Love your friend and hate your enemy—and get him soon." With the Indian officer there was little of the spirit of revenge. It was "Carry on" with him. What if somebody did do something awfully mean! He will suffer for it in due time. But with the Scotchman it was different.

I knew a man of the famous Black Watch regiment and saw a great deal of him. He impressed me more than anyone else I met among the British. His name was Jock, and he came from the little island of Rum in the north of Scotland. The burden of his song was "Fair play and fight." At the battle of Mons he saw a German medical officer stop to fix the wound of a Scotchman. Another Scotchman saw the German, too. His blood was up too high and he plunged his bayonet through the German. Jock saw the act and quick as a flash rushed at his brother Scot and gave him a taste of his bayonet. The act had been foul play and Jock would not see that; Jock had the word "fight" written all over his face. Nothing would get past him without his giving a good fight. In a friendly soccer game Jock saw a man do some dirty playing and before the game was over he had given the man such a thrashing with his stick that he had to be carried off the field. Jock was champion boxer of his company and cared not who might want to pick a scrap with him. He was more like a bulldog than anything else. He was always good and ready for a scrap.

Through his fighting he had twice been reduced from sergeant to private, but he did not care. He had fought what his sense of fairness taught him to fight. That was all that mattered. A Sergeant came in one day and borrowed something from Jock. Jock gave it to him with the characteristic Scotch warning, "See that ye get yon back again." The Sergeant, his dignity much ruffled, said, "Who do you think you're talking to?" "Hoo aboot theeself?" said Jock. "If I'd been a mon such as ye I'd been more than a sergeant to-day." That was enough for the Sergeant. He knew the man he was talking to.

But along with the bulldog part of Jock's make-up went the most sympathetic and loving nature I ever knew. With those near his heart he had something of the nature of the mother lion. He would spring at anyone who attempted to disparage or to injure any of his friends, and would stand up for them to the last minute. He had not the least pride about his own goodness, but when it came to that of a friend it was different. There was a man in camp with us who had been a lay preacher before the war. He had not had

many educational advantages but had studied for the lay preaching at night after work. Jock took strongly to him, for the man was sincere. The man's name was mentioned in a general conversation one day and someone said he thought the lay preacher would slack when it came to the pinch. Jock was up like a shot. "Who said that?" he said. "I did," returned the speaker. "You've got me to answer for that," said Jock. "It's a lie, and you take it back or step up to me." The thoughtless offender was somewhat put out. His evidence was not good enough to give him courage to face the fiery Scotchman. "Well," he said, "I don't know him very well, but that's what somebody said." Jock let loose a few more words of wisdom to the offender and let him alone to recuperate from the blow to his self-esteem. "I'm far fro' bein' a Y. M. C. A. bloke," said Jock, "but I ha' a good eye for them as are." "Y. M. C. A. bloke" was the Scotchman's way of describing a man who took his religion seriously. There were all sorts in the army as in the rest of the world, most of us short of the mark, others over it. The religion of Jock,

so near as I could make it out, was a religion of fight. He had been brought up to fight and had fought all his life. His duty in life was to fight, and the devil take the man that tries foul play while Jock's around. There may be in this a reason for the way the Black Watch fought on the advance to and past Bagdad.

Among all the types in the British army, the man who appealed to me as most like Americans was an Australian, a Lieutenant Pilot in the Royal Flying Corps. Making a friend of him seemed like making a friend of a man at home. He used to come into my tent when we each had a minute and talk things over. He loved to talk about America. The free and open-air life that he had led on the cattle ranches of Australia had made him lean more to the American lively spirit than to the more sedate demeanor of the English. He loved to tell of his exploits as a cow puncher in Australia and say he hoped some day to spend some time on the ranches of Western America. He was a university man and had done a lot of thinking out in Mesopotamia. He, too, was with the English for the first time. In Australia he

had been far away from the home country and had always looked to America as the logical place to go if he ever left Australia. He was loyal to England right down to the bone, but he felt that with the great freedom for self-government that England gave Australia, the Australians were up against the same sort of problems of government that America was. He felt that in England there was very much precedent, very much that was ingrained in the people and the government, while Australia and America were only beginning to make precedents, only beginning to put customs into the grain of the people. Only he felt that America had done so much more than Australia. He looked at America as a sort of big brother. He would surely get there some day. Just for the present his was to do his bit, probably his all for the mother country to whose call Australia was responding so splendidly.

I wish I could go on to tell of more and more friends, more and more different kinds of men with whom I came into intimate contact in Mesopotamia: Welshmen with their beautiful voices and pleasant ways of pronouncing the English lan-

guage; the men from the different parts of England, Yorkshire, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Hantshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire; and all the other sections represented, each with their little characteristics, each with their attractions. But there must be an end.

It was a day full of mixed feelings when I boarded a transport at Busra, bound for Bombay, from where I was to sail for America. I hated to leave the land where I had been so delightfully busy for a year, and hated to leave all the good friends that I had made among the British. But I was anxious to get home and see whether Uncle Sam could find a use for me in his new army.

We lay at the bank on the big B. I. steamer, *Edavana,* till the sun sank to rest. The white clouds that hovered just above the horizon turned with the rays of the setting sun, first a tender pink, then a rich scarlet and finally gold with glistening, silvering edges. The blue sky above became paler and paler. Finally the brilliancy of the clouds died away and a beautiful sky with a thin crescent moon in its center was left over

the tops of the palms. Farewell to the beauties of Mesopotamia.

Next morning we were far from Busra, steaming full speed to Bombay. On deck I met an officer I had known in Bagdad. "Hello," he said. "Going on leave?" "No," I said. "Farther than that. Going home to America to get into the fight."

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